A

SIMPLE STORY.

IN

TWO VOLUMES.

By Mrs. INCHBALD.

VOL. II.

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CHAPTER I.

THROUGHOUT life, there cannot happen an event to arreſt the reflection of a thoughtful mind more powerfully, or to leave ſo laſting an impreſſion, as that of returning to a place after a few years abſence, and obſerving an entire alteration in reſpect to all the perſons who once formed the neighbourhood—To find ſome, who but a few years before were left in the bloom of youth and health, dead—to find children left at ſchool, married, with children of their own—ſome perſons who were

in riches, reduced to poverty—others who were in poverty, become rich—thoſe, once renowned for virtue, now deteſted for their vice—roving huſbands grown conſtant—conſtant ones, become rovers—the firmeſt friends, changed to the moſt implacable enemies—beauty faded.—In a word, every change to demonſtrate —

" All is tranſitory on this ſide the grave."

Actuated by a wiſh, that the reflective reader may experience the ſenſation, which an attention to circumſtances ſuch as theſe, muſt cauſe ; he is deſired to imagine ſeventeen years elapſed, ſince he has ſeen or heard of any of thoſe perſons, who in the foregoing volume have been introduced to his acquaintance—and now, ſuppoſing himſelf at the period of thoſe ſeventeen years, follow the ſequel of their hiſtory.

To begin with the firſt female object of this ſtory.—The beautiful, the beloved Miſs Milner—ſhe is no longer beautiful—

no

no longer beloved—no longer—tremble while you read it!—no longer—virtuous.

Dorriforth, the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth, is become a hard-hearted tyrant. The compaſſionate, the feeling, the juſt Lord Elmwood, an example of implacable rigour and injuſtice.

Miſs Woodley is grown old, but leſs with years than grief.

The child Ruſhbrook is become a man, and the apparent heir of Lord Elmwood's fortune; while his own daughter, his only child by his once adored Miſs Milner, he refuſes ever to ſee again, in vengeance to her mother's crimes.

The leaſt wonderful change, is the death of Mrs. Horton. Except

Sandford, who remains much the ſame as heretofore.

We left Lady Elmwood in the laſt volume at the ſummit of human happineſs; a loving and beloved bride.—We begin this volume and find her upon her death-bed.

At thirty-five, her "Courſe was run" —a courſe full of perils, of hopes, of fears, of joys, and at the end of ſorrows; all exquiſite of their kind, for exquiſite were the feelings of her ſuſceptible heart.

At the commencement of this ſtory, her father is deſcribed in the laſt moments of his life, with all his cares fixed upon her, his only child—how vain thoſe cares! how vain every precaution that was taken for her welfare! She knows, ſhe reflects upon this; and yet, torn by that inſtinctive power which a parent feels, Lady Elmwood on her dying day has no worldly thought, but that of the future happineſs of *her* only child.—To every other proſpect before her, "Thy will be done" is her continual exclamation; but where the miſery

of

of her daughter preſents itſelf, the dying penitent would there, combat the will of heaven.

To ſtate the progreſſion by which vice gains a predominance in the heart, may be a uſeful leſſon; but it is one ſo little to the ſatisfaction of moſt readers, that it is not meant to be related here, all the degrees of frailty by which Lady Elmwood fell; but inſtead of picturing every occaſion of her fall, come briefly to the events that followed.

There are, nevertheleſs, ſome articles under the former claſs, which ought not to be entirely omitted.

Lord Elmwood, after four years paſſed in the moſt perfect enjoyment of happineſs, the marriage ſtate could give; after ſeeing himſelf the father of a beautiful daughter, whom he loved with a tenderneſs nearly equal to his love for her mother, Lord Elmwood was then under the indiſpenſable

neceſſity of leaving them both for a time in order to ſave from the depredation of his ſteward, a very large eſtate in the Weſt-Indies. His voyage was tedious; his reſidence there, from various accidents, prolonged from time to time, till near three years had at length paſſed away.—Lady Elmwood, at firſt only unhappy, became at laſt provoked; and giving way to that impatient, irritable diſpoſition ſhe had ſo ſeldom governed, reſolved, in ſpite of his injunctions, to divert the melancholy hours his abſence cauſed, by mixing in the gayeſt circles of London. His Lordſhip at this time, and for many months before, had been detained abroad by a ſevere and dangerous illneſs, which a too cautious fear of her uneaſineſs had prompted him to conceal; and ſhe received his frequent apologies for not returning, with a ſuſpicion and reſentment they were calculated, but not intended, to inſpire.

To violent anger, ſucceeded a degree of indifference ſtill more fatal—Lady Elmwood's

wood's heart was never formed for ſuch a ſtate—there, where all the paſſions tumultuous ſtrove by turns, one among them ſoon found the means to occupy all vacancies—that one was love.—The dear object of her fondeſt, trueſt, affections was away; and thoſe affections painted the time ſo irkſome that was paſt; ſo weariſome that, which was ſtill to come; ſhe flew from the preſent tedious ſolitude, to the dangerous ſociety of one, whoſe every care to charm her, could not repay her for a moment's loſs of him, whoſe abſence he ſupplied.—Or if the delirium gave her a moment's recompenſe, what were her ſufferings and remorſe, when ſhe was awakened from the fleeting joy by the unexpected arrival of her huſband?—How happy, how tranſporting, had been that arrival a few months before!—As it had then been felicitous, it was now bitter—this word, however, weakly expreſſes—Language affords none, to deſcribe Lady Elmwood's ſenſations on being told her Lord was arrived, and that neceſſity only had ſo long delayed his return.

Guilty, but not hardened in her guilt, her pangs, her ſhame were the more exceſſive. She fled the place at his approach; fled his houſe, never again to return to a habitation where he was the maſter. She did not, however, eſcape with her paramour but eloped to ſhelter herſelf in the moſt dreary retreat; where ſhe partook of no one comfort from ſociety, or from life, but the ſtill unremitting friendſhip of Miſs Woodley.—Even her infant daughter ſhe left behind, nor would allow herſelf the conſolation of her innocent, but reproachful, ſmiles—ſhe left her in her father's houſe that ſhe might be under his protection; parted with her, as ſhe thought for ever, with all the agonies that mothers part from their infant children: and yet even a mother ſcarcely can conceive how much more ſharp thoſe agonies were, on beholding the child ſent after her, as the perpetual outcaſt of its father.

Lord Elmwood's love to his lady had been extravagant—the effect of his hate was

was extravagant likewiſe. Beholding himſelf ſeparated from her by a barrier never to be removed, he vowed in the deep torments of his revenge, not to be reminded of her by one individual object; much leſs by one ſo nearly allied to her as her child. To beſtow upon that his affections, would be, he imagined, ſtill in ſome ſort, to divide them with the mother.—Firm in his reſolution, the beautiful Matilda was, at the age of ſix years, ſent out of her father's houſe, and received by her mother with the tenderneſs, but with the anguiſh, of thoſe parents, who behold their offſpring viſited with the puniſhment due only to their own offences.

During this tranſaction, which was performed by his Lordſhip's agents at his command, he himſelf was engaged in an affair of ſtill weightier importance—that of life or death:—he determined upon his own death, or the death of the man who had wounded his honour and his happineſs. A duel with his old antagoniſt was the re-

ſult of this determination; nor was the Duke of Avon (before the deceaſe of his father and eldeſt brother, Lord Frederick Lawnly) backward to render all the ſatisfaction that was required.—For it was no other than he, whoſe love for Lady Elmwood had ſtill ſubſiſted, and whoſe art and induſtry left no means uneſſayed to perfect his deſigns;—No other than he, (who, next to Lord Elmwood, was ever of all her lovers moſt prevalent in her heart,) to whom Lady Elmwood yielded her own and her huſband's future peace, and gave to his vanity a prouder triumph, than if ſhe had never given her hand in preference to another. This triumph however was but ſhort—a month only, after the return of Lord Elmwood, his Grace was called upon to anſwer for his conduct, and was left upon the ſpot where they met, ſo maimed, and defaced with ſcars, as never again to endanger the honour of a huſband. As Lord Elmwood was inexorable to all accommodation; their engagement laſted

laſted for ſome ſpace of time; nor any thing but the ſtedfaſt aſſurance that his opponent was ſlain, could at laſt have torn his Lordſhip from the field, though he himſelf was mortally wounded.

Yet even during that period of his danger, while for days he laid in the continual expectation of his own death, not all the entreaties of his deareſt, moſt intimate, and moſt reſpected friends, could prevail upon him to pronounce forgiveneſs to his wife, or ſuffer them to bring his daughter to him for his laſt bleſſing.

Lady Elmwood, who was made acquainted with the minuteſt circumſtance as it paſſed, appeared to wait the news of her Lord's deceaſe with patience; but upon her brow, and in every lineament of her face it was marked, his death was an event ſhe would not for a day ſurvive—and ſhe had left her child an orphan, to have followed Lord Elmwood to the grave.—She was prevented the trial; he recovered; and

and from the ample and diſtinguiſhed vengeance he had obtained upon the irreſiſtible perſon of the Duke, in a ſhort time ſeemed to regain his uſual tranquillity.

He recovered, while Lady Elmwood fell ſick and lingered—poſſeſſed of youth and a good conſtitution, ſhe lingered till ten years decline brought her to that period, with which the reader is now going to be preſented.

CHAPTER II.

IN a lonely country on the borders of Scotland, a ſingle houſe by the ſide of a dreary heath, was the reſidence of the once gay, volatile Miſs Milner. In a large gloomy apartment of this ſolitary habitation (the windows of which ſcarce rendered the light acceſſible) was laid upon her death-bed, the once lovely Lady Elmwood—pale, half ſuffocated with the loſs of breath; yet her ſenſes perfectly clear and collected, which ſerved but to ſharpen the anguiſh of dying.

In one corner of the room, by the ſide of an old-faſhioned ſtool, kneels Miſs Woodley, praying moſt devoutly for her ſtill beloved friend, but in vain endeavouring to pray compoſedly—floods of tears pour down her furrowed cheeks, and frequent

quent ſobs of ſorrow break through each pious ejaculation.

Cloſe by her mother's ſide, one hand ſupporting her head, the other wiping from her face the damp dew of death, behold Lady Elmwood's daughter—Lord Elmwood's daughter too—yet he far away negligent of what either ſuffers.—Lady Elmwood turns to her often, and attempts an embrace, but her feeble arms forbid, and they fall motionleſs.—The daughter perceiving thoſe ineffectual efforts, has her whole face convulſed with ſorrow; kiſſes her mother; holds her to her boſom; and hangs upon her neck, as if ſhe wiſhed to cling there, and the grave not to part them.

On the other ſide the bed ſits Sandford—his hair grown white—his face wrinkled with age—his heart the ſame as ever——The reprover, the enemy of the vain, idle, and wicked; but the friend, the comforter of the forlorn and miſerable.

Upon

Upon thoſe features where ſarcaſm, reproach, and anger dwelt to threaten and alarm the ſinner; mildneſs, tenderneſs, and pity beamed, to ſupport and conſole the penitent. Compaſſion changed his language, and ſoftened all thoſe harſh tones that uſed to denounce reſentment.

"In the name of God," ſaid he to Lady Elmwood, "that God who ſuffered for you, and ſuffering, knew and pitied all our weakneſſes—By him, who has given his word 'to take compaſſion on the ſinner's tears,' I bid you hope for mercy.—By that innocence in which you once lived, be comforted—By the ſorrows you have known ſince your degradation, hope, in ſome degree, to have atoned—By that ſincerity which ſhone upon your youthful face when I joined your hands; thoſe thouſand virtues you have at times given proof of, you were not born to die the death of the wicked."

As he ſpoke theſe words of conſolation, her trembling hand claſped his—her dying eyes darted a ray of brightneſs—but her failing voice endeavoured, in vain, to articulate.—At length, her eyes fixing upon her daughter as their laſt dear object, ſhe was juſt underſtood to utter the word "Father."

"I underſtand you," replied Sandford, "and by all that influence I ever had over him, by my prayers, my tears," (and they flowed at the word) I will implore him to own his child."

She could now only ſmile, in thanks.

"And if I ſhould fail," continued he, "yet while I live, ſhe ſhall not want a friend or protector—all an old man like me can anſwer for"——here his tears interrupted him.

Lady Elmwood was ſufficiently ſenſible of his words and their import, to make a ſign

ſign as if ſhe wiſhed to embrace him; but finding her life leaving her faſt, ſhe reſerved this laſt token of love for her daughter—With a ſtruggle ſhe lifted herſelf from her pillow, clung to her child—and died in her arms.

CHAPTER III.

LORD Elmwood was by nature, and more from education, of a ſerious, thinking, and philoſophic turn of mind. His religious ſtudies had completely taught him to conſider this world but as a paſſage to another; to enjoy with gratitude what Heaven in its bounty ſhould beſtow, and to bear with ſubmiſſion all which in its vengeance it might inflict—In a greater degree than moſt people he practiſed this doctrine; and as ſoon as the firſt ſhock he received from Lady Elmwood's conduct was abated, an entire calmneſs and reſignation enſued; but ſtill of that ſenſible and feeling kind, which could never force him to forget the happineſs he had loſt; and it was this ſenſibility which urged him to fly from its more keen recollection as much as poſſible—this he alledged as the reaſon he would never ſuffer Lady Elmwood,

wood, or even her child, to be named in his hearing. But this injunction (which all his friends, and even the ſervants in the houſe who attended his perſon, had received) was, by many people, ſuſpected rather to proceed from his reſentment than his tenderneſs; nor did he himſelf deny, that reſentment mingled with his prudence; for prudence he called it not to remind himſelf of happineſs he could never taſte again, and of ingratitude that might impel him to hatred; and prudence he called it not to form another attachment near to his heart; more eſpecially ſo near as a parent's, which might a ſecond time expoſe him to all the torments of ingratitude, from one he whom affectionately loved.

Upon theſe principles he formed the unſhaken reſolution, never to acknowledge Lady Matilda as his child or acknowledging her as ſuch—never to ſee, hear of, or take on concern whatever in her fate and fortune. The death of her mother appeared a favourable time, had he been ſo inclined,

to

to have recalled this declaration which he had ſolemnly and repeatedly made—ſhe was now deſtitute of the protection of her other parent, and it became his duty, at leaſt to provide her a guardian, if he did not chooſe to take that tender title upon himſelf.—But to mention either the mother or child to Lord Elmwood was an equal offence, and prohibited in the ſtrongeſt terms to all his friends and houſehold; and as he was an excellent good maſter, a ſincere friend, and a moſt generous patron; not one of his acquaintance or dependants, were hardy enough to draw upon themſelves his certain diſpleaſure, which was violent in the extreme, by even the official intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death.

Sandford himſelf, intimidated through age, or by the auſtere, and even moroſe, manners Lord Elmwood had of late years adopted; Sandford wiſhed, if poſſible, ſome other would undertake the dangerous taſk of recalling to his Lordſhip's memory, there ever was ſuch a perſon as his wife. He adviſed

adviſed Miſs Woodley to indite a proper letter to him on the ſubject; but ſhe reminded him, ſuch a ſtep was ſtill more perilous in her, than any other perſon, as ſhe was the moſt deſtitute being on earth, without the benevolence of Lord Elmwood. The death of her aunt, Mrs. Horton, had left her ſole reliance on Lady Elmwood; and now her death had left her totally dependant upon the Earl—for her Ladyſhip, long before her decaſe, had declared it was not her intention, to leave a ſingle ſentence behind her in the form of a will—She had no will, ſhe ſaid, but what ſhe would wholly ſubmit to Lord Elmwood's; and, if it were even his will, her child ſhould live in poverty, as well as baniſhment, it ſhould be ſo. But, perhaps, in this implicit ſubmiſſion to his Lordſhip, there was a diſtant hope that the neceſſitous ſituation of his daughter might plead more forcibly than his parental love; and that knowing her abandoned of every ſupport but through himſelf, that idea might form

ſome

ſome little tie between them; and be at leaſt a token of the relationſhip.

But as Lady Elmwood anxiouſly wiſhed this principle upon which ſhe acted, ſhould be concealed from his Lordſhip's ſuſpicion, ſhe included her friend Miſs Woodley, in the ſame fate; and thus, the only perſons dear to her, ſhe left, but at Lord Elmwood's pleaſure, to be preſerved from periſhing in want.—Her child was too young to adviſe her on this ſubject, her friend too diſintereſted; and at this moment they were both without the ſmalleſt means of ſupport, except through the juſtice or compaſſion of his Lordſhip.—Sandford had, indeed, promiſed his protection to the daughter; but his liberality had no other ſource than from his patron, with whom he ſtill lived as uſual, except during the winter when his Lordſhip reſided in town, he then moſtly ſtole a viſit to Lady Elmwood—On this laſt viſit, he ſtaid to ſee her buried.

After

After ſome mature deliberations, Sandford was now preparing to go to Lord Elmwood at his houſe in town, and there to deliver himſelf the news that muſt ſooner or later be told; and he meant alſo to venture, at the ſame time, to keep the promiſe he had made to his dying lady—but the news reached Lord Elmwood before Sandford arrived; it was announced in the public papers, and by that means came firſt to his knowledge.

He was breakfaſting by himſelf, when the newſpaper that firſt gave the intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death, was laid before him—the paragraph contained theſe words:

" On Wedneſday laſt died, at Dring-
" Park, a village in Northumberland, the
" right honourable Counteſs Elmwood—
" This lady, who has not been heard of for
" many years in the faſhionable world, was
" a rich heireſs, and of extreme beauty;
" but although ſhe received overtures from
" many men of the firſt rank, ſhe preferred

" her

" her guardian, the preſent Lord Elm-
" wood (then the humble Mr. Dorriforth)
" to them all---and it is ſaid, they enjoyed
" an uncommon ſhare of felicity, till his
" Lordſhip going abroad, and remaining
" there ſome time, the conſequences (to a
" moſt captivating young woman left with-
" out a protector) were ſuch, as to cauſe a
" ſeparation on his return.---Her Ladyſhip
" has left one child, a daughter, about
" fifteen."

Lord Elmwood had ſo much feeling upon reading this, as to lay down the paper, and not to take it up again for ſeveral minutes—nor did he taſte his chocolate during this interval, but leaned his elbow on the table and reſted his head upon his hand—He then roſe up—walked two or three times acroſs the room—ſat down again—took up the paper—and read as uſual.——Nor let the vociferous mourner, or the perpetual weeper, here complain of his want of ſenſibility—but let them remember Lord Elmwood

was

was a man—a man of underſtanding—of courage—of fortitude—with all, a man of the niceſt feelings—and who ſhall ſay, but that at the time he leaned his head upon his hand, and roſe to walk away the ſenſe of what he felt, he might not feel as much as Lady Elmwood did in her laſt moments.

Be this as it may, his Lordſhip's ſuſceptibility on the occaſion was not ſuſpected by any one—he paſſed that day the ſame as uſual; the next day too, and the day after.—On the morning of the fourth day, he ſent for his ſteward to his ſtudy, and after talking of other buſineſs, ſaid to him,

"Is it true that Lady Elmwood is dead?"

"It is, my Lord," replied the man.

His Lordſhip looked unuſually grave, and at this reply, fetched an involuntary ſigh.

"Mr. Sandford," my lord, continued the ſteward, "ſent me word of the news, but left it to my own diſcretion, whether I made your Lordſhip acquainted with it or not."

"Where is Sandford?" aſked Lord Elmwood.

"He was with my Lady," replied the ſteward.

"When ſhe died?" aſked his Lordſhip.

"Yes, my Lord."

"I am glad of it—he will ſee every thing ſhe deſired done.—Sandford is a good man, and would be a friend to every body."

"He is a very good man indeed, my Lord."

There was now a ſilence.——Mr. Giffard then bowing, ſaid, "Has your Lordſhip any further commands?"

"Write

"Write to Sandford," ſaid Lord Elmwood, heſitating as he ſpoke, "and tell him to have every thing performed as ſhe deſired.—And whoever ſhe may have ſelected for the guardian of her child, has my conſent to act as ſuch.—Nor in one inſtance, where I myſelf am not concerned will I contradict her will."—The tears ruſhed to his eyes as he ſaid this, and cauſed them to ſtart in the ſteward's—obſerving which, he ſternly reſumed,

"Do not ſuppoſe from this converſation, that any of thoſe reſolutions I have long ſince taken are, or will be, changed—they are the ſame; and ſhall continue the ſame: —and your interdiction, Sir, (as well as every other perſon's) remains juſt the ſame as formerly; never to mention this ſubject to me in future."

"My Lord, I always obeyed you," replied Mr. Giffard, "and hope I always ſhall."

"I hope ſo too." replied his Lordſhip, in a threatening accent—"Write to Sandford," continued he, "to let him know my pleaſure, and that is all you have to do."

The Steward bowed and withdrew.

But before his letter arrived to Sandford, Sandford arrived in town; and Mr. Giffard related to him word for word what had paſſed between him and his Lord.—Upon every occaſion, and upon every topic, except that of Lady Elmwood and her child, Sandford was juſt as free with Lord Elmwood as he had ever been; and as uſual (after his interview with the ſteward) went into his Lordſhip's apartment without any previous notice. His Lordſhip ſhaked him by the hand as upon all other meetings; and yet, whether his fears ſuggeſted it or not, Sandford thought he appeared more cool and reſerved with him than common.

During

During the whole day, the ſlighteſt mention of Lady Elmwood, or of her child, was cautiouſly avoided—and not till the evening, (after Sandford had rung for his candle to retire to reſt, it was brought, and he had wiſhed his Lordſhip good night) did he dare to mention the ſubject.—— He then, after taking leave, and going to the door—turned back and ſaid, "My Lord,"——

It was eaſy to gueſs on what he was preparing to ſpeak—his voice failed, the tears began to trickle down his cheeks, he took out his handkerchief, and could proceed no farther.

"I thought," ſaid Lord Elmwood, angrily, "I thought I had given my orders upon this ſubject—did not my ſteward write them to you?"

"He did, my Lord," ſaid Sandford, humbly, "but I was ſet out before they arrived."

"Has he not *told* you my mind then?" cried his Lordſhip, more angrily ſtill.

"He has;" replied Sandford,---"But"---

"But what, Sir?"---cried Lord Elmwood.

"Your Lordſhip," continued Sandford, "was miſtaken in ſuppoſing Lady Elmwood left a will; ſhe left none."

"No will? no will at all?"—ſaid his Lordſhip, ſurpriſed.

"No, my Lord," anſwered Sandford, "ſhe wiſhed every thing to be as you willed."

"She left me all the trouble, then, you mean?"

"No great trouble, Sir; for except two perſons, her Ladyſhip has not left any one elſe to hope for your protection."

"And who are theſe two?" cried he haſtily.

"One

"One, my Lord, I need not name—the other is Miſs Woodley."

There was a delicacy and an humility, in the manner in which Sandford delivered this reply, that Lord Elmwood could *not* reſent, and he only returned,

"Miſs Woodley, is ſhe yet living?"

"She is—I left her at the houſe I came from."

"Well, then," anſwered his Lordſhip, "you muſt ſee that my ſteward provides for thoſe two perſons.—That care I leave to you—and ſhould there be any complaints, on you they fall."

Sandford bowed and was going.

"And now," reſumed his Lordſhip, in a ſtern and exalted voice, "let me *never* hear again on this ſubject.—You have full power to act in regard to the perſons you have mentioned; and upon you their ſituation, their care, their whole management

depend—but be ſure, you never let them be named before me, from this moment."

"Then," ſaid Sandford, "as this muſt be the laſt time they are mentioned, I muſt now take the opportunity to diſburthen my mind of a charge"——

"What charge?"—cried his Lordſhip, morofely interrupting him.

"Though Lady Elmwood, my Lord, left no will behind, ſhe left a requeſt."

"Requeſt"—ſaid his Lordſhip, ſtarting—"If it is for me to ſee her daughter, I tell you now before you aſk I will not grant it—for by heaven (and he ſpoke and looked moſt ſolemnly) though I have no reſentment to the innocent child, and wiſh her happy, yet I will never ſee her.—Never, for her mother's ſake, ſuffer my heart to be again ſoftened by an object I might doat on.—Therefore, Sir, if that is the requeſt, it is already anſwered; my will is fixed."

'The requeſt, my Lord," replied Sandford,

ford, (taking out a pocket book from whence he drew ſeveral papers) "is contained in this letter; nor do I rightly know what its contents are."—And he held it out to him.

"Is it Lady Elmwood's writing?" cried his Lordſhip, extremely diſcompoſed.

"It is, my Lord---She called for ink and paper and wrote it a few days before ſhe died, and enjoined me to deliver it to you, with my own hands."

"I refuſe to read it."---cried he, putting it from him---and trembling while he did ſo.

"She deſired me," ſaid Sandford, (ſtill preſenting the letter) "to conjure you to read it, *for her father's ſake.*"

Lord Elmwood took it inſtantly.---But as ſoon as it was in his hand, he ſeemed diſtreſſed to know what he ſhould do with it---in what place, to go to read it---or how fortify himſelf againſt its contents.---He appeared aſhamed too, that he had been ſo far prevailed upon, and ſaid, by way of excuſe,

"For Mr. Milner's ſake I would do much---nay, any thing, but that to which, I have juſt now ſworn never to conſent.---For his ſake I have borne a great deal---for his ſake alone, his daughter died my wife.---You know, no other motive than reſpect for him, prevented my divorcing her.——Pray (and he heſitated) was ſhe buried with him?"

"No, my Lord---ſhe expreſſed no ſuch deſire; and as that was the caſe, I did not think it neceſſary to carry the corpſe ſo far."

At the word corpſe, Lord Elmwood ſhrunk, and looked ſhocked beyond meaſure---but recovering himſelf, ſaid, "I am ſorry for it;---for he loved *her* ſincerely, if ſhe did not love him---and I wiſh they had been buried together."

"It is not then too late," ſaid Sandford, and was going on---but his Lordſhip interrupted him.

"No, no---we will have no diſturbing of the dead."

"Read

"Read her letter then," ſaid Sandford, "and bid her reſt in peace."

"If it is in my power," returned his Lordſhip, "to grant what ſhe aſks I will---but if her demand is what I apprehend, I cannot, I will not, bid her reſt by complying.---You know my reſolution, and my diſpoſition, and take care how you provoke me.---You may do an injury to the very perſon you are ſeeking to befriend---the very maintenance I mean to allow her daughter I can withdraw."

Poor Sandford, all alarm at this menace, replied with energy, "My Lord, unleſs you begin the ſubject, I never will preſume to mention it again."

"I take you at your word,"---returned his Lordſhip," and in conſequence of that, and that alone, we are friends.---Good night, Sir."

Sandford bowed with all humility, and they went to their ſeparate bedchambers

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER Lord Elmwood had retired into his chamber, it was ſome time before he read the letter Sandford had given him. He firſt walked backwards and forwards in the room---he then began to take off ſome part of his dreſs, but did it ſlowly. At length he diſmiſſed his valet, and ſitting down, took the letter from his pocket.---He looked at the ſeal, but not at the direction; for he ſeemed to dread to ſee Lady Elmwood's hand-writing.---He then laid it on the table, and began again to undreſs. He did not proceed, but taking up the letter quickly, (with a kind of effort in making the reſolution) broke it open. Theſe were its contents:

"My Lord,

"Who writes this letter I well know---I "well know alſo to whom it is addreſſed.

"---I feel

" ---I feel with the moſt powerful force
" both our ſituations ;---nor ſhould I dare
" to offer you even this humble petition,
" but that at the time you receive it, there
" will be no ſuch perſon as I am in exiſt-
" ance.

" For myſelf, then, all concern will be
" over--- but there is a care that purſues
" me to the grave, and threatens my want
" of repoſe even there.

" I leave a child---I will not call her
" mine, that has undone her---I will not
" call her yours, that will be of no avail.
" ---I preſent her before you as the grand-
" daughter of Mr. Milner.---Oh! do not
" refuſe an aſſylum even in your own houſe,
" to the deſtitute offspring of your friend ;
" the laſt, and only remaining branch of
" his family.

" Receive her into your houſehold, be her condition there ever ſo abject.---I cannot write diſtinctly what I would---my ſen-

" ſes

" ſes are not impaired, but the powers of " expreſſion are.---The unfortunate child " in the ſcripture (a leſſon I have ſtudied) " his complaint, has made this wiſh cling " ſo faſt to my heart, that without the diſ- " tant hope of its being fulfilled, death " would have more terrors than my weak " mind could ſupport.

' *I will go to my father; how many ſer-* ' *vants live in my father's houſe, and are fed* ' *with plenty, while I ſtarve in a foreign* ' *land?*'

" I do not aſk a parent's feſtive rejoic- " ing at her approach---I do not even aſk " her father to behold her;---but let her " live under his protection.---For her " grandfather's ſake do not refuſe this--- " to the child of his child whom he truſt- " ed to your care, do not refuſe it.

" Be her hoſt; I remit the tie of being " her parent.---Never ſee her---but let her " ſometimes live under the ſame roof with " you.

" It

" It is Miſs Milner your ward, to whom " you never refuſed a requeſt, ſupplicates " you---not now for your nephew Ruſh- " brook, but for one ſo much more dear, " that a denial——ſhe dares not ſuffer her " thoughts to glance that way---She will " hope---and in that hope, bids you fare- " well, with all the love ſhe ever bore " you.

" Farewell Lord Elmwood---and before " you throw this letter from you with con- " tempt or anger, caſt your imagination " into the grave where I am lying.---Re- " flect upon all the days of my paſt life--- " the anxious moments I have known, " and what has been their end.---Behold " *me*, alſo in my altered face there is no " anxiety---no joy or ſorrow---all is over.--- " My whole frame is motionleſs---my " heart beats no more.---Look at my hor- " rid habitation, too,---and aſk yourſelf--- " whether I am an object of reſentment?"

While Lord Elmwood read this letter, it trembled in his hand: he once or twice wiped

wiped the tears from his eyes as he read, and once laid the letter down for a few minutes. At its concluſion the tears flowed faſt down his face; but he ſeemed both aſhamed and angry they did, and was going to throw the paper upon the fire; he however ſuddenly checked his hand, and putting it haſtily into his pocket, went to bed.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning when Lord Elmwood and Sandford met at breakfaſt, Sandford was pale with fear for the ſucceſs of Lady Elmwood's letter – his Lordſhip was pale too, but there was beſide upon his face ſomething which evidently marked he was diſpleaſed – Sandford obſerved it, and was all humbleneſs, both in his words and looks, in order to ſoften him.

As ſoon as the breakfaſt was removed, his Lordſhip drew Lady Elmwood's letter from his pocket, and holding it towards Sandford, ſaid,

" That may be of more value to you, than it is to me, therefore I give it you."

Sandford called up a look of ſurpriſe, as if he did not know the letter again.

" 'Tis

" 'Tis Lady Elmwood's letter," ſaid his Lordſhip, " and I give it to you for two reaſons."

Sandford took it, and putting it up, aſked fearfully " What thoſe two reaſons were?"

" Firſt," ſaid Lord Elmwood, " becauſe I think it is a relick you may like to preſerve—my ſecond reaſon is, that you may ſhow it to her daughter, and let her know why, and on what conditions I grant her mother's requeſt."

" You do then grant it?" cried Sandford joyfully; " I thank you—you are kind—you are conſiderate."

" Be not too haſty in your gratitude," returned his Lordſhip, " you may have cauſe to recall it."

" I know what you have ſaid," replied Sandford, " You have ſaid you grant Lady Elmwood's requeſt—you cannot recall theſe word, nor I my gratitude."

" Do

"Do you know what her requeſt is?" ſaid Lord Elmwood.

"Not exactly, my Lord - I told you before, I did not; but it is no doubt ſomething in favour of her child."

"I think not," replied his Lordſhip. "Such as it is, however, I grant it.—But in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word--no farther; and one neglect of my commands, releaſes my promiſe totally."

"We will take care, Sir, not to diſobey them."

"Then liſten to what they are—and to you I give the charge of delivering them again.—Lady Elmwood has petitioned me in the name of her father, (a name I reverence) to give his grandchild the ſanction of my protection.—In the literal ſenſe, to ſuffer her to reſide occaſionally at one of my ſeats; diſpenſing at the ſame time with my ever ſeeing her."

"And

"And you will comply?"

"I will, till ſhe encroaches on this conceſſion, and dare to aſk for a greater.—I will, while ſhe avoids my ſight, or the giving me any remembrance of her.—But whether by deſign or by accident, I ever ſee or hear from her; that moment my compliance to her mother's ſupplication ceaſes, and I abandon her once more."

Sandford ſighed.—His Lordſhip continued.

"I am glad her requeſt ſtopped where it did.—I would rather comply with her deſires than not; and I rejoice they are ſuch as I can grant with eaſe and honour to myſelf. I am ſeldom now at Elmwood houſe; let her daughter go there;—the few weeks or months I am down in the ſummer ſhe may eaſily in that extenſive houſe avoid me—while ſhe does, ſhe lives in ſecurity—when ſhe does not, you know my reſolution."

Sandford bowed—his Lordſhip reſumed.

"Nor

"Nor can it be a hardſhip to obey this command---ſhe cannot lament the ſeparation from a parent whom ſhe never knew—" Sandford was going eagerly to prove the error of that aſſertion, but his Lordſhip prevented him, ſaying, "In a word—without farther argument—if ſhe obeys me in this, I will certainly provide for her as my daughter during my life, and leave her a fortune at my death – but if ſhe dares——"

Sandford interrupted the menace he ſaw prepared for utterance, ſaying, "And you ſtill mean, I ſuppoſe, to make Mr. Ruſhbrook your heir?"

"Have you not heard me ſay ſo? And do you imagine I have changed my determination? I am not given to alter my reſolutions, Mr. Sandford; and I thought you knew I was not;—beſides will not my title be extinct, whoever I make my heir? —Could any thing but a ſon have preſerved my title?"

"Then it is yet poſſible——"

"By marrying again, you mean?—No —no

—no—I have had enough of marriage—and Henry Ruſhbrook I leave my heir. Therefore, Sir——"

"My Lord, I do not preſume——"

"Do not, Sandford, and we may ſtill be friends.—But I am not to be controlled as formerly; my temper is changed of late; changed to what it was originally; till your ſcholaſtic and religious rules reformed it. You may remember, how troubleſome it was to conquer my ſtubborn diſpoſition in my youth; then, indeed, you did; but in my manhood you will find the taſk more difficult."

Sandford again repeated "He ſhould not preſume——"

To which his Lordſhip again made anſwer, "Do not, Sandford; and added, "For I have a ſincere regard for you, and ſhould be loath at theſe years to quarrel with you ſeriouſly."

Sandford turned away his head to hide his tears.

"Nay,

"Nay, if we do quarrel," reſumed his Lordſhip, "You know it muſt be your own fault;—and as this is a theme the moſt likely of any (indeed the only one on which we can have a difference ſuch as we cannot forgive) take care never from this day to reſume it;—indeed that of itſelf, is an offence I will not pardon.—I have been clear and explicit in all I have ſaid; there can be no fear of miſtaking my meaning, therefore all future explanation is unneceſſary—nor will I permit a word, or a hint on the ſubject from any one, without ſhowing my reſentment to the hour of my death." He was going out of the room.

"But before we bid adieu to the ſubject for ever, my Lord—there was another perſon, whom I named to you——"

"Do you mean Miſs Woodley?—Oh, by all means let her live at Elmwood-houſe too.—On conſideration, I have no objection to ſee Miſs Woodley at any time—I ſhall be glad to ſee her.—Do not let *her* be frightened

frightened at me—to her I ſhall be the ſame I have always been."

"She is a good woman, my Lord," cried Sandford, pleaſed.

"You need not tell me that, Mr. Sandford; I know her worth."—And his Lordſhip left the room.

Sandford, to relieve Miſs Woodley and her lovely charge from the ſuſpenſe in which he had left them, ſet off for their habitation the next day; in order himſelf to conduct them from thence to Elmwood Houſe, and appoint ſome retired part of it for Lady Matilda, againſt the annual viſit her father paid there. But before he left London, Giffard, the ſteward, took an opportunity to wait upon him, and let him know, that his Lord had acquainted him, with the conſent he had given for his daughter to be admitted at Elmwood Caſtle; and upon what reſtrictions; likewiſe that he had denounced the moſt ſevere threats, ſhould theſe reſtrictions be broken. Sandford thanked Giffard for his friendly information,

tion, which ſerved him as a ſecond warning of the circumſpection that was neceſſary; and having taken leave of his Lordſhip under the pretence "he could not live in the ſmoke of London," he ſet out for the north.

It is unneceſſary to ſay with what delight Sandford was received by Miſs Woodley, and the hapleſs daughter of Lady Elmwood, even before he told his errand. They both loved him ſincerely; more eſpecially Lady Matilda; whoſe forlorn ſtate, and innocent ſufferings, had ever excited his compaſſion in the extremeſt degree, and had cauſed him ever to treat her with the utmoſt affection, tenderneſs, and reſpect. She knew too, how much he had been her mother's friend; for that ſhe alſo loved him; and being honoured with the friendſhip of her father, ſhe looked up to him with reverence and awe. For Matilda (with an excellent underſtanding, a ſedateneſs above her years, and early accuſtomed to the moſt private converſe be-

tween Lady Elmwood and Miſs Woodley) was perfectly acquainted with the whole private hiſtory of her mother; and was by her taught, that reſpect and admiration of her father's virtues which they juſtly meritted.

Notwithſtanding the joy of beholding Mr. Sandford, once more to cheer by his preſence their ſolitary dwelling; no ſooner were the firſt kind greetings over, than the dread of what he might have to inform them, poſſeſſed both poor Matilda and Miſs Woodley ſo powerfully, their gladneſs was changed into affright.---Their apprehenſions were far more forcible than their curioſity;---they durſt not aſk a queſtion, and even began to wiſh he would continue ſilent upon the ſubject, on which they feared to liſten.---For near two hours he was ſo.——At length, after a ſhort interval from ſpeaking, (during which they waited with anxiety for what he might next ſay) he turned to Lady Matilda, and ſaid,

"You

"You don't aſk for your father, my dear."

"I did not know it was proper," ſhe replied timidly.

"It is always proper," anſwered Sandford, "for *you* to think of him, though he ſhould never think on you."

She burſt into tears, ſaying, ſhe "*did* think of him, but ſhe felt an apprehenſion at mentioning his name,"---and ſhe wept bitterly while ſhe ſpoke.

"Nay, do not think I reproved you," ſaid Sandford; "I but told you what was right."

"Nay," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "it is not for that ſhe cries thus---ſhe fears her father has not complied with her mother's requeſt.—Perhaps not even read her letter?"

"Yes, he has read it," returned Sandford.

"Oh heavens!" exclaimed Matilda, claſping her hands together, and the tears falling faſter ſtill.

"Do not be ſo much alarmed my dear," ſaid Miſs Woodley; you know we are prepared for the worſt; and you know you promiſed your mother, whatever your fate was, to ſubmit with patience."

"Yes," replied Matilda, "and I am prepared for every thing, but my father's refuſal to my dear mother."

"Your father has not refuſed your mother's requeſt," replied Sandford.

She was leaping from her ſeat with ecſtaſy.

"But," continued he, "do you know what her requeſt was?"

"Not entirely," replied Matilda, "and ſince it is granted I am careleſs.---But ſhe told me her letter concerned none but me."

To explain perfectly to Matilda Lady Elmwood's letter, and that ſhe might perfectly underſtand upon what terms ſhe was admitted into Elmwood Houſe, Sandford now read the letter to her; and repeated,

as

as nearly as he could remember, the whole of the converſation that paſſed between Lord Elmwood and himſelf; not even ſparing, with an erroneous delicacy, any of thoſe threats her father had denounced, ſhould ſhe dare to break through the limits he preſcribed---nor did he try to ſoften, in one inſtance, a word his Lordſhip uttered. She liſtened ſometimes with tears, ſometimes with hope, but always with awe, and terror, to every ſentence wherein her father was concerned. Once ſhe called him cruel ---then exclaimed "he was kind;" but at the end of Sandford's intelligence, concluded ſhe was happy and grateful for the boon beſtowed.---Even her mother had not a more exalted and tranſcendant idea of Lord Elmwood's worth, than his daughter had formed; and this little bounty juſt obtained, had not been greater in her mother's eſtimation, than it was now in her's. ---Miſs Woodley, too, ſmiled at the proſpect before her---ſhe eſteemed Lord Elmwood beyond any mortal living---ſhe was

proud to hear what he had ſaid in her praiſe, and overjoyed at the proſpect ſhe ſhould be once again in his company; picturing, at the ſame time, a thouſand of the brighteſt hopes, from watching every emotion of his ſoul, and catching every proper occaſion to excite, or increaſe, his paternal ſentiments.---Yet ſhe had the prudence to conceal thoſe vague hopes from his child, leſt a diſappointment might prove fatal; and aſſuming a behaviour not too much elated or depreſſed, ſhe adviſed they ſhould hope for the beſt, but yet, as uſual, expect and prepare for the worſt.—After taking meaſures for quitting their melancholy abode; within the fortnight they all departed for Elmwood Caſtle.---Matilda, Miſs Woodley, and even Sandford, firſt viſiting Lady Elmwood's grave, and bedewing it with their tears.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was on a dark evening in the month of March, that Lady Matilda, accompanied by Sandford and Miſs Woodley, arrived at Elmwood Caſtle, the magnificent ſeat of her father.—Sandford choſe the evening; rather to ſteal into the houſe privately, than by any appearance of parade, ſuffer Lord Elmwood to be reminded of it by the public prints, or by any other accident.—Nor would he give the neighbours or ſervants the ſlighteſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, the daughter of their Lord was admitted into his houſe in any other ſituation than, that, which ſhe really was.

As the Porter opened the gates of the avenue to the carriage that brought them, Matilda felt an awful, and yet a gladful

ſenſation no terms can deſcribe.—As ſhe entered the door of the houſe this ſenſation increaſed—and as ſhe paſſed along the ſpacious hall, the ſplendid ſtaircaſe, and many ſtately apartments, wonder! with a crowd of the tendereſt, yet moſt afflicting, ſentiments ruſhed to her heart.—She gazed with aſtoniſhment!——ſhe reflected with more.

"And is *my father* the maſter of this houſe?" ſhe cried—"And was my mother once the miſtreſs of this houſe?"—Here a flood of tears relieved her from a part of that burthen, which was before inſupportable.

"Yes," replied Sandford, "and you are the miſtreſs of it now, till your father arrives."

"Good God!" exclaimed ſhe, "and will he ever arrive? and ſhall I live to ſleep under the ſame roof with my father?"

"My dear," replied Miſs Woodley, "have not you been told ſo?"

"Yes" ſaid ſhe, "but though I heard it with extreme pleaſure, yet the idea never

ſo

ſo forcibly affected me as at this moment.—I now feel, as the reality approaches, this has been kindneſs ſufficient—I do not aſk for more—I am now convinced, from what this trial makes me feel, that to ſee my father would cauſe a ſenſation, a feeling, I could not ſurvive."

The next morning gave to Matilda more objects ſtill of admiration and wonder, as ſhe walked over the extenſive gardens, groves, and other pleaſure grounds belonging to the houſe. She who had never been beyond the dreary, ruinate place where her deceaſed mother had choſen her reſidence, was naturally ſtruck with amazement and delight at the grandeur of a ſeat, which travellers have come for miles to ſee, and not thought their time miſpent.

There was one object, however, among all ſhe ſaw, which attracted her attention above the reſt, and ſhe would ſtand for hours to look at it—This was a full length portrait of Lord Elmwood, eſteemed a very

capital picture, and a great likeneſs—to this picture ſhe would ſigh and weep; though when it was firſt pointed out to her, ſhe ſhrunk back with fear, and it was ſome time before ſhe dared venture to caſt her eyes completely upon it. In the features of her father ſhe was proud to diſcern the exact moulds in which her own appeared to have been modelled; yet Matilda's perſon, ſhape, and complection were ſo extremely like what her mother's once were, that at the firſt glance ſhe appeared to have a ſtill greater reſemblance of her, than of her father—but her mind and manners were all Lord Elmwood's; ſoftened by the delicacy of her ſex, the extreme tenderneſs of her heart, and the melancholy of her ſituation.

She was now in her ſeventeenth year—of the ſame age, within a year and a few months, of her mother when ſhe became the ward of Dorriſorth.—She was juſt three years old when her father went abroad, and remembered ſomething of bidding

ding him farewell; but more of taking cherries from his hand as he pulled them from the tree to give her.

Educated in the ſchool of adverſity, and inured to retirement from her infancy, ſhe had acquired a taſte for all thoſe amuſements which a recluſe life affords—She was fond of walking and riding—was accompliſhed in the arts of muſic and drawing, by the moſt careful inſtructions of her mother—and as a ſcholar ſhe excelled moſt of her ſex, from the great pains Sandford had taken with that part of her education, and the great abilities he poſſeſſed for the taſk.

In devoting certain hours of the day to ſtudy with him, others to muſic, riding, and ſuch recreations, Matilda's time never appeared tedious at Elmwood Houſe, although ſhe neither received nor paid one viſit - for it was ſoon divulged in the neighbourhood upon what ſtipulation ſhe reſided at her father's, and intimated, that the moſt

moſt prudent and friendly behaviour of the friends both of her father and of herſelf, would be, to take no notice whatever that ſhe lived among them: and as Lord Elmwood's will was a law all around, ſuch was the conſequence, of his will being known or ſuppoſed.

Neither did Miſs Woodley regret the want of viſiters, but found herſelf far more ſatisfied in her preſent ſituation, than her moſt ſanguine hopes could have formed--- She had a companion whom ſhe loved with an equal fondneſs, with which ſhe had loved her deceaſed mother; and frequently in this charming manſion, where ſhe had ſo often beheld Lady Elmwood, her imagination pictured Matilda as her riſen from the grave in her former youth, health, and exquiſite beauty.

In peace, in content, though far from happineſs, the days and weeks paſſed away till about the middle of Auguſt, when preparations began to be made for the arrival

of

of Lord Elmwood.—The week in which he was to come was at length fixed, and ſome part of his retinue was arrived before him.—When this was told to Matilda ſhe ſtarted, and looked juſt as her mother at her age often times had done, when, in ſpite of her love, ſhe was conſcious ſhe had offended him, and was terrified at his approach. Sandford obſerving this, put out his hand, and taking hers ſhook it kindly; and bade her (but it was not in a cheerful tone) "not be afraid." This gave her no confidence; and ſhe began, before his Lordſhip's arrival, to ſeclude herſelf in thoſe apartments which were allotted for her during the time of his ſtay; and in the timorous expectation of his coming, her appetite declined and ſhe loſt all her colour.—Even Miſs Woodley, whoſe ſpirits had been for ſome time elated with the hopes ſhe had formed; on drawing near to the teſt, found thoſe hopes vaniſhed; and though ſhe endeavoured to conceal it, ſhe was replete with apprehenſions.—Sandford, had certainly fewer fears than either; yet

yet upon the eve of the day on which his patron was to arrive, he was evidently caſt down.

Lady Matilda once aſked him—"Are you certain, Mr. Sandford, you made no miſtake in reſpect to what Lord Elmwood ſaid, when he granted my mother's requeſt? Are you ſure he *did* grant it?—Was there nothing equivocal on which he may ground his diſpleaſure ſhould he hear I am here?—Oh! do not let me hazard the being once again turned out of his houſe!—Oh! ſave me from provoking him perhaps to curſe me."—And here ſhe claſped her hands together with the moſt fervent petition, in the dread of what might happen.

"If you doubt my word or my ſenſes," ſaid Sandford, "call Gifford, and let him inform you;—my Lord repeated the ſame words to him he did to me."

Though from her reaſon Matilda could not doubt of any miſtake from Mr. Sandford, yet her fears ſuggeſted a thouſand

ſcruples;

ſcruples; and this reference to the ſteward ſhe received with the utmoſt ſatisfaction, (though ſhe did not think it neceſſary to apply to him,) as it perfectly convinced her of the folly of thoſe ſuſpicions ſhe had entertained.

"And yet, Mr. Sandford," ſaid ſhe, "if it is ſo, why are you leſs cheerful than you were? I cannot help thinking but it muſt be the expectation of Lord Elmwood, which has cauſed in you this change."

"I don't know;" replied Sandford, careleſſly, "but I believe I am grown afraid of your father.--His temper is a great deal altered from what it once was—he exalts his voice, and uſes harſh expreſſions upon the leaſt provocation—his eyes flaſh lightning, and his face is diſtorted with anger on the ſlighteſt motives—he turns away his old ſervants at a moment's warning, and no conceſſion can make their peace.—In a word, I am more at my eaſe when I am away from him---and I really believe," added he with a ſmile, but with a

tear

tear at the ſame time, "I really believe I am more afraid of him in my age, than he was of me when he was a boy."

Miſs Woodley was preſent; ſhe and Matilda looked at one another; and each ſaw the other turn pale, at this deſcription.

The day at length came on which Lord Elmwood was expected to dinner.——It had been a high gratification to his daughter to have gone to the topmoſt window of the houſe, to have only beheld his chariot enter the avenue; but it was a gratification which her fears, her tremor, her extreme ſenſibility would not permit her to enjoy.

Miſs Woodley and ſhe ſat down that day to dinner in their retired apartments; which were detached from the other part of the houſe by a gallery; and of the door leading to the gallery they had a key to impede any one from paſſing that way, without firſt ringing a bell; to anſwer which, was the ſole employment of a ſervant who was placed there during his Lordſhip's reſidence,

ſidence, leſt by any accident he might chance to come near that unfrequented part of the houſe; on which occaſion the man was to give immediate notice to his Lady.

Miſs Woodley and ſhe ſat down to dinner, but did not dine---Sandford ate, as uſual, with Lord Elmwood.—When the ſervant brought up tea, Miſs Woodley aſked him if he had ſeen his Lord—The man anſwered, "Yes, Madam; and he looks vaſtly well."—Matilda wept with joy to hear it.

About nine in the evening Sandford rung at the bell, and was admitted—and never was he ſo welcome—Matilda hung upon him, as if his recent ſociety with her father had endeared him to her more than ever; and ſtaring anxiouſly in his face, ſeemed to aſk him to tell her ſomething of Lord Elmwood, and ſomething that ſhould not alarm her.

"Well

"Well—how do you find yourſelf?" ſaid he to her.

"How are you, Mr. Sandford?" ſhe returned, with a ſigh.

"Oh! very well," replied he.

"Is my Lord in a good temper?" aſked Miſs Woodley.

"Yes; very well," replied Sandford, with indifference.

"Did he ſeem glad to ſee you?" aſked Matilda.

"He ſhook me by the hand," replied Sandford.

"That was a ſign he was glad to ſee you, was it not?" ſaid Matilda.

"Yes; but he could not do leſs."

"Nor more," replied ſhe.

"He looks very well, our ſervant tells us," ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"Extremely well indeed," anſwered Sandford: "and, to tell the truth, I never ſaw him in better ſpirits."

"That is well:" ſaid Matilda, and ſighed a weight of fears from her heart.

"Where

"Where is he now, Mr. Sandford?"

"Gone to take a walk about his grounds, and ſo I ſtole here the time."

"What was your converſation during dinner?"

"Horſes, hay, farming, and politics."

"Won't you ſup with him?"

"I ſhall ſee him again before I go to bed."

"And again to-morrow!"—cried Matilda, "what happineſs!"

"He has viſiters to-morrow," ſaid Sandford, "coming for a week or two."

"Thank heaven!" ſaid Miſs Woodley, "he will then be diverted from thinking on us."

"Do you know," returned Sandford, "it is my firm opinion, that his thinking of ye at preſent, is the cauſe of his good ſpirits."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Matilda, lifting up her hands with rapture.

"Nay, do not miſtake me;" ſaid Sandford; "I would not have you build a foundation

foundation for joy upon this; for if he is in ſpirits that you are in this houſe—ſo near him—poſitively under his protection—yet he will not allow himſelf to think that, is the cauſe of his content—and the ſentiments he has adopted, and are now become natural to him, will remain the ſame as ever; nay, perhaps with greater force, while he ſuſpects his weakneſs (as he calls it) acting in oppoſition."

"If he does but think of me with tenderneſs," cried Matilda, "I am recompenſed."

"And what recompenſe would his kind thoughts be to you," ſaid Sandford, "were he to turn you out to beggary?"

"A great deal—a great deal," ſhe replied.

"But how are you to know he has theſe kind thoughts, while he gives you no proof of them?"

"No, Mr. Sandford; but *ſuppoſing* we could know them without the proof."

"But

"But as that is impoſſible," anſwered he, "I ſhall ſuppoſe, till the proof appears, I am miſtaken."

Matilda looked deeply concerned that the argument ſhould conclude in her diſappointment, for to have believed herſelf thought of with tenderneſs by her father, would have alone conſtituted her happineſs.

When the ſervant came up with ſomething by way of ſupper, he told Mr. Sandford his Lordſhip was returned from his walk and had enquired for him; Sandford immediately bade his companions good night, and left them.

"How ſtrange is this!" cried Matilda, when Miſs Woodley and ſhe were alone, "My father within a few rooms of me, and yet I am debarred from ſeeing him!—Only by walking a few paces I might be at his feet, and perhaps receive his bleſſing."

"You make me ſhudder," ſaid Miſs Woodley; "but ſome ſpirits leſs fearful than

than mine, might perhaps adviſe you to try the experiment."

"Not for worlds," returned Matilda; "no counſel could tempt me to ſuch temerity; and yet to entertain the thought, that it is poſſible I could do this, is a ſource of great comfort."

This converſation laſted till bed time, and later; for they ſat up beyond their uſual hour to indulge it.

Miſs Woodley ſlept little, but Matilda leſs—ſhe awaked repeatedly during the night, and every time ſighed to herſelf, "I ſleep in the ſame houſe with my father! Bleſſed ſpirit of my mother, look down and rejoice."

CHAPTER VII.

THE next day the whole caſtle appeared to Lady Matilda (though ſhe was in ſome degree retired from it) all tumult and buſtle; as was uſually the caſe while his Lordſhip was there. She ſaw from her windows ſervants running acroſs the yards and park, horſes and carriages driving with fury, all the ſuite of a noble man; and it ſeemed ſometimes to elate, at other times to depreſs her.

Theſe impreſſions however, and others of fear and anxiety, which her father's firſt arrival had excited, by degrees wore away; and after ſome ſhort time, ſhe was in the ſame tranquil ſtate ſhe enjoyed before he came.

He

He had viſiters, to ſtay a week or two; he paid ſome viſits himſelf for ſeveral days; and thus the time paſſed, till it was about four weeks ſince he arrived; during which, Sandford, with all his penetration, could never clearly diſcover whether he had once called to mind his daughter was living in the ſame houſe. He had not named her (that was not extraordinary) conſequently no one durſt name her to him; but he had not even mentioned Miſs Woodley, of whom he had ſo lately ſpoken in the kindeſt terms, and ſaid, "He ſhould take pleaſure in ſeeing her again." From theſe contradictions in Lord Elmwood's behaviour in reſpect to her, it was Miſs Woodley's plan neither to throw herſelf in his way, or avoid him. She therefore frequently walked about the houſe while he was in it, not indeed wholly without reſtraint, but at leaſt with the ſhow of liberty. This freedom, indulged for ſome time without peril, became at laſt leſs cautions

tious; and no ill conſequences ariſing from its practice, her ſcruples gradually ceaſed.

One morning, however, as ſhe was croſſing the large hall, thoughtleſs of danger, a footſtep at a diſtance alarmed her almoſt without knowing why—She ſtopped for a moment, thinking to return; the ſteps approached quicker, and before ſhe could retreat ſhe beheld Lord Elmwood at the other end of the hall, and perceived that he ſaw her.—It was now too late to heſitate what was to be done; ſhe could not go back, and had not courage to go on; ſhe therefore ſtood ſtill.—Diſconcerted, and much affected at his ſight, (their former intimacy coming to her mind, together with the many years, and many ſad occurrences paſſed, ſince ſhe laſt ſaw him) all her intentions, all her meditated plans how to conduct herſelf on ſuch an occaſion, gave way to a ſudden ſhock—and to make the meeting yet more diſtreſſing, her very fright ſhe knew muſt ſerve to recall more powerfully to his mind, the ſubject ſhe moſt wiſhed him to forget. The ſteward

was with his Lordſhip, and as they came up cloſe by her ſide, Giffard obſerving him look at her earneſtly, ſaid ſoftly, but ſo as ſhe heard him, "My Lord, it is Miſs Woodley." Lord Elmwood's hat was off immediately, and coming to her with alacrity, he took her by the hand and ſaid, "Indeed, Miſs Woodley, I did not know you —I am very glad to ſee you;" and while he ſpoke, ſhook her hand with a cordiality her tender heart could not bear—and never did ſhe feel ſo hard a ſtruggle as to reſtrain her tears. But the thought of Matilda's fate---the idea of awaking in his mind a ſentiment that might irritate him againſt his child, wrought more forcibly than every other effort; and though ſhe could not reply diſtinctly, ſhe replied without weeping.—Whether he ſaw her embarraſſment, and wiſhed to releaſe her from it, or was in haſte to conceal his own; he left her almoſt inſtantly; but not till he had entreated ſhe would dine that very day with him and Mr. Sandford, who were

were to dine without other company.—She curtſied aſſent, and flew to tell Matilda what had occured.—After liſtening with anxiety and joy to all ſhe told, Matilda laid hold of that hand ſhe ſaid Lord Elmwood had held, and preſſed it to her lips with love and reverence.

When Miſs Woodley made her appearance at dinner, Sandford, (who had not ſeen her ſince the invitation, and did not know of it) looked amazed!—on which his Lordſhip ſaid, "Do you know, Sandford, I met Miſs Woodley this morning, and had it not been for Giffard I ſhould have paſſed her without knowing her—but Miſs Woodley, if I am not ſo much altered but that you knew me, I take it unkind you did not ſpeak firſt."——She was unable to ſpeak even now—he ſaw it, and changed the converſation; which Sandford was happy to join, for in the preſent diſcourſe he did not feel himſelf very comfortable.

As they advanced in their dinner, Miſs Woodley's and Sandford's embarraſſment diminiſhed; while Lord Elmwood in his turn became, not embarraſſed but abſent and melancholy.—He now and then ſighed heavily—and called for wine much oftener than he was accuſtomed.

When Miſs Woodley took her leave, his Lordſhip invited her to dine with him and Sandford whenever it was convenient to her;—he ſaid many things, too, of the ſame kind, and all with the utmoſt civility, yet not with that warmth with which he had ſpoken in the morning—into that he had been ſurpriſed, while this coolneſs was the effect of reflection.

When ſhe came to Lady Matilda, and Sandford had joined them, they talked and deliberated on what had paſſed.—

"You acknowledge, Mr. Sandford," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "that you think my preſence affected Lord Elmwood ſo as to make him much more thoughtful than uſual; if you imagine theſe thoughts were upon Lady Elmwood, I will never intrude again;

again; but if you ſuppoſe I cauſed him to think upon his daughter, I cannot go too often."

"I don't ſee how he can divide thoſe two objects in his mind," replied Sandford, "and therefore you muſt e'en viſit him on, and take your chance, what reflections you may inſpire but, be they what they will, time will take away from you that power of affecting him."

She concured in the opinion, and occaſionally walked into his Lordſhip's apartments, dined, or took coffee with him, as the accident ſuited; and obſerved according to Sandford's preſcience, that time, wore off that impreſſion her viſits firſt made.—Lord Elmwood now became juſt the ſame before her, as before others.—She eaſily diſcerned, too, through all that politeneſs which he aſſumed—he was no longer the conſiderate, the forbearing character he formerly was; but haughty, impatient, imperious, and more than ever, implacable.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Lord Elmwood had been at his country ſeat about ſix weeks, Mr. Ruſhbrook, his nephew, and his adopted child, the friendleſs boy whom poor Lady Elmwood firſt introduced into his uncle's houſe, and by her kindneſs preſerved there —arrived from his travels, and was received by his Lordſhip with all that affectionate warmth due to the man he thought worthy to make his heir. Ruſhbrook had been a beautiful boy, and was now an extremely handſome young man; he had made an unuſual progreſs in his ſtudies, had completed the tour of Italy and Germany, and returned home with the air and addreſs of a perfect man of faſhion—there was, beſide, an elegance and perſuaſion in his

his manner almoſt irreſiſtable.—Yet with all thoſe accompliſhments, when he was introduced to Sandford, and put out his hand to take his, Sandford, with evident reluctance, gave it to him; and when Lord Elmwood aſked him in the young man's preſence, "if he did not think his nephew greatly improved?" he looked at him from head to foot, and muttered "he could not ſay he obſerved it." The colour heightened in Mr. Ruſhbrook's face upon this occaſion, but he was too well bred not to be ſtill in perfect good humour.

Sandford ſaw this young man treated in the houſe of Lord Elmwood with the ſame reſpect and attention as if he had been his Lordſhip's ſon; and it was but probable the old prieſt ſhould make a compariſon between the ſituation of him, and of Lady Matilda Elmwood.—Before her, it was Sandford's meaning to have concealed his thoughts upon the ſubject, and never to have mentioned it but with compoſure;

that was, however, impoſſible—unuſed to conceal his feelings; at the name of Ruſhbrook his countenance would always change, and a ſarcaſtic ſneer, and ſometimes a frown of reſentment, force their way in ſpite of his reſolution.—Miſs Woodley, too, with all her boundleſs charity and good will, was, upon this occaſion, induced to limit their exceſs; and they did not extend ſo far as to reach poor Ruſhbrook—She even, and in *reality*, did not think him handſome or engaging in his manners—ſhe thought his gaiety friviloufneſs, his complaiſance affectation, and his good humour impertinence.—It was impoſſible to conceal thoſe unfavourable ſentiments entirely from Matilda; for when the ſubject aroſe, as it frequently did, Miſs Woodley's undiſguiſed heart, and Sandford's undiſguiſed countenance, told them inſtantly.—Matilda had the underſtanding to imagine, ſhe was, perhaps, the object who had thus deformed Mr. Ruſhbrook, and frequently (though he was a ſtranger to her, and one who

who had cauſed her many a jealous heart-ach) frequently ſhe would ſpeak in his vindication.

"You are very good," ſaid Sandford one day to her; "you like him becauſe you know your father loves him."

This was a hard ſentence to the daughter of Lord Elmwood, to whom her father's love would have been more precious than any other bleſſing—She, however, checked the aſſault of envy, and kindly replied,

"My mother loved him, too, Mr. Sandford."

"Yes," anſwered Sandford, "he has been a grateful man to your poor mother—She did not ſuppoſe when ſhe took him into the houſe, when ſhe intreated your father to take him, and through her careſſes and officious praiſes of him to his uncle, firſt gave him that power he now poſſeſſes over him; ſhe little foreſaw, at that time, his ingratitude, and its effects."

"Very true," ſaid Miſs Woodley, with a heavy ſigh.

"What ingratitude?" ſaid Matilda; "do you ſuppoſe Mr. Ruſhbrook is the cauſe my father will not ſee me? Oh do not pay Lord Elmwood's motives ſo ill a compliment."

"I do not ſay he is the abſolute cauſe," returned Sandford; "but if a parent's heart is void, I would have it remain ſo, till ſtored by its lawful owner—a uſurper I deteſt."

"No one can take Lord Elmwood's heart by force," replied his daughter, "it muſt, I believe, be a free gift to the poſſeſſor; and as ſuch, whoever has it, has a right to it."

In this manner ſhe would plead the young man's excuſe—perhaps but to hear what could be ſaid in his diſfavour, for ſecretly his name was bitter to her—and once ſhe exclaimed in vexation, on Sandford's ſaying Lord Elmwood and Mr. Ruſhbrook were gone out ſhooting together,

"All

"All that pleaſure is now eclipſed which I uſed to take in liſtening to the report of my father's gun, for I cannot now diſtinguiſh his, from his paraſite's."

Sandford, much as he diſliked Ruſhbrook—for this expreſſion which compriſed her father in the reflection, turned to Matilda in extreme anger; but as he ſaw the colour mount to her face, for what, in the ſtrong feelings of her heart, had eſcaped her lips, he did not ſay a word—and by a flood of tears that followed after, he rejoiced to ſee how much ſhe reproved herſelf.

Miſs Woodley, vext to the heart, and provoked every time ſhe ſaw Lord Elmwood and Ruſhbrook together, and ſaw the familiar terms on which this young man lived with his benefactor, now made her viſits to his Lordſhip very ſeldom.—If Lord Elmwood obſerved this, he did not appear to obſerve it; and though he received her very politely when ſhe did pay him a viſit, it was always very coldly; nor did

did ſhe ſuppoſe if ſhe never went, he would ever aſk for her. For his daughter's ſake, however, ſhe thought it right ſometimes to ſhew herſelf before him; for ſhe knew it muſt be impoſſible that, with all his ſeeming indifference, Lord Elmwood could ever ſee her without thinking for a moment on his child; and what one fortunate thought might ſometime bring about, was an object too ſerious for her to ſlight.—She therefore, after remaining confined to her apartments near three weeks, (excepting thoſe ſhort and anxious walks ſhe and Matilda ſtole, while Lord Elmwood dined, or before he roſe in a morning) went one forenoon into his Lordſhip's apartments, where as uſual, ſhe found him, Mr. Sandford, and Mr. Ruſhbrook.—After ſhe had ſat about half an hour, converſing with them all, though but very little with the latter, his Lordſhip was called out of the room upon ſome buſineſs; preſently after Sandford; and now, not much pleaſed with the companion with whom ſhe was left,

left, ſhe roſe and was going likewiſe, when Ruſhbrook fixed his ſpeaking eyes upon her, and cried,

"Miſs Woodley, will you pardon me what I am going to ſay?"

"Certainly, Sir—You can, I am ſure, ſay nothing but what I muſt forgive."—But ſhe made this reply with a diſtance and a reſerve, very unlike the uſual manner of Miſs Woodley.

He looked at her earneſtly and cried, "Ah! Miſs Woodley, you don't behave ſo kindly to me as you uſed to do!"

"I do not underſtand you, Sir,"—ſhe replied, very gravely;——"Times are changed, Mr Ruſhbrook, ſince you were laſt here—you were then but a child."

"Yet I love all thoſe perſons now, I loved then;" replied he; "and ſo I ſhall for ever."

"But you miſtake, Mr. Ruſhbrook; I was not even then ſo very much the object of your affections—there were other ladies you

you loved better.—Perhaps you don't remember Lady Elmwood?"

"Don't I?"—cried he, "Oh!" (claſping his hands and lifting up his eyes to heaven) "ſhall I ever forget her?"

That moment Lord Elmwood opened the door; the converſation of courſe that moment ended; but confuſion at the ſudden ſurpriſe was on the face of both the parties—his Lordſhip ſaw it, and looked at each by turns, with a ſternneſs that made poor Miſs Woodley ready to faint; while Ruſhbrook, with the moſt natural and happy laugh that ever was affected, cried, "No, don't tell my Lord, pray, Miſs Woodley."—She was more confuſed than before; and his Lordſhip turning to him, aſked what the ſubject was.---By this time he had invented one, and continuing his laugh, ſaid, "Miſs Woodley, my Lord, will to this day proteſt ſhe ſaw my apparition when I was a boy; and ſhe ſays it is a

ſign

ſign I ſhall die young, and is really much affected at it.

Lord Elmwood turned away before this ridiculous ſpeech was concluded; yet ſo well had it been acted, he did not for an inſtant doubt its truth.

Miſs Woodley felt herſelf greatly relieved; and yet ſo little is it in the power of thoſe we diſlike to do any thing to pleaſe us, that from this very circumſtance, ſhe formed a ſtill more unfavourable opinion of Mr. Ruſhbrook than ſhe had done before.---She ſaw in this little incident the art of diſſimulation, cunning, and duplicity in its moſt glaring ſhape; and deteſted the method by which they had each eſcaped Lord Elmwood's ſuſpicion, and perhaps anger, the more, becauſe it was ſo dexterouſly managed.

Lady Matilda and Sandford were both in their turns informed of this trait in Mr. Ruſhbrook's character; and although Miſs

Miſs Woodley had the beſt of diſpoſitions, and upon every occaſion ſpoke the ſtricteſt truth, yet in relating this occurrence, ſhe did not ſpeak all the truth; for every circumſtance that would have told to the young man's advantage, *literally* ſlipped her memory.

The twenty ninth of October arrived; on which a dinner, a ball, and a ſupper, was given by Lord Elmwood to all the neighbouring gentry---the peaſants alſo dined in the park off a roaſted bullock; ſeveral caſks of ale were diſtributed, and the bells of the village rung.---Matilda who heard and ſaw ſome part of this feſtivity from her windows, inquired the cauſe; but even the ſervant who waited upon her had too much ſenſibility to tell her, and anſwered, "he did not know." Miſs Woodley however ſoon learnt the reaſon, and groaning with the painful ſecret, informed her, "Mr. Ruſhbrook on that day was come of age."

"My

"My birth day was laſt week," replied Matilda; but not a word beſide.

In their retired apartments, the day paſſed away not only ſoberly, but almoſt ſilently; for to ſpeak upon any ſubject that did not engage their thoughts had been difficult, and to ſpeak upon the only one that did, had been afflictive.

Juſt as they were ſitting down to dinner their bell gently rung, and in walked Sandford.

"Why are you not among the revellers, Mr. Sandford?" cried Miſs Woodley, with an ironical ſneer—(the firſt her features ever wore)—"Pray, were not you invited to dine with the company?"

"Yes," replied Sandford; "but my head aked; and ſo I had rather come and take a bit with you."

Matilda, as if ſhe had beheld his heart as he ſpoke, clung round his neck and ſobbed on his boſom: he put her peeviſhly away, crying, "Nonſenſe, nonſenſe—eat your dinner." But he did not eat himſelf.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT a week after this, Lord Elmwood went out two days for a viſit: conſequently Ruſhbrook was for that time maſter of the houſe. The firſt morning he went a ſhooting, and returning about noon, enquired of Sandford, who was ſitting in the room, if he had taken up a volume of plays left upon the table—"I read no ſuch things," replied Sandford, and quitted the room abruptly. Ruſhbrook then rung for his ſervant, and deſired him to look for the book, aſking him angrily, "Who had been in the apartment? for he was ſure he had left it there when he went out."—The ſervant withdrew to enquire, and preſently returned with the volume

lume in his hand, and "Miſs Woodley's compliments, ſhe begs your pardon, Sir, ſhe did not know the book was yours, and hopes you will excuſe the liberty ſhe took."

"Miſs Woodley!" cried Ruſhbrook, with ſurprize, "ſhe comes ſo ſeldom into theſe apartments, I did not ſuppoſe it was her who had it—take it back to her inſtantly, with my reſpects and I beg ſhe will keep it."

The man went; but returned with the book again, and laying it on the table without ſpeaking, was going away; when Ruſhbrook, hurt at receiving no ſecond meſſage, ſaid, "I am afraid, Sir, you did very wrong in taking this book from Miſs Woodley."

"It was not from her I took it, Sir," replied the man, "it was from Lady Matilda."

Since he had entered the houſe, Ruſhbrook had never before heard her name—he was ſhocked—confounded more than ever—

ever—and to conceal what he felt, inſtantly ordered the man out of the room.

In the mean time, Miſs Woodley and Matilda were talking over this trifling occurrence; and frivolous as it was, drew from it ſtrong concluſions of Ruſhbrook's inſolence and power.—In ſpite of her pride, the daughter of Lord Elmwood even wept at the inſult ſhe had received on this inſignificant occaſion; for the volume being merely taken from her at Mr. Ruſhbrook's command, ſhe felt an inſult; and the manner in which it was done by the ſervant, might contribute to the offence.

While Miſs Woodley and ſhe were upon this converſation, a note came from Ruſhbrook to Miſs Woodley, wherein he entreated he might be permitted to ſee her.—She ſent a verbal anſwer, "She was engaged." He ſent again, begging ſhe would name her own time. But certain of a ſecond denial, he followed the ſervant who took

took the laſt meſſage, and as Miſs Woodley came out of her apartment into the gallery to ſpeak to him, Ruſhbrook preſented himſelf, and told the man to retire.

"Mr. Ruſhbrook," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "this intruſion is inſupportable;—and deſtitute as you may think me of the friendſhip of Lord Elmwood"——

In the ardour with which Ruſhbrook was waiting to expreſs himſelf, he interrupted her, and caught hold of her hand.

She immediately ſnatched it from him, and withdrew into her chamber.

He followed, ſaying in a low voice, "Dear Miſs Woodley hear me."

At that juncture Lady Matilda, who was in an inner room, came out of it into Miſs Woodley's.—Perceiving a gentleman, ſhe ſtopped ſhort at the door.

Ruſhbrook caſt his eyes upon her, and ſtood motionleſs—his lips only moved. "Do not depart, Madam," ſaid he, "without hearing my apology for being here."

Though

Though Matilda had never ſeen him ſince her infancy, there was no cauſe to tell her who it was that addreſſed her—his elegant and youthful perſon, joined to the incident which had juſt occurred, convinced her it was Ruſhbrook; and ſhe looked at him with an air of ſurpriſe, but with ſtill more, of dignity.

"Miſs Woodley is ſevere upon me, Madam," continued he, "ſhe judges me unkindly; and I am afraid ſhe will prepoſſeſs you with the ſame unfavourable ſentiments."

Still Matilda did not ſpeak, but looked at him with the ſame air of dignity.

If, Lady Matilda," reſumed he, "I have offended you, and muſt quit you without pardon, I am more unhappy than I ſhould be with the loſs of your father's protection —more forlorn, than when an orphan boy, your mother firſt took pity on me."

At this laſt ſentence, Matilda turned her eyes on Miſs Woodley, and ſeemed in doubt what reply ſhe was to give.

Ruſhbrook

Ruſhbrook immediately fell upon his knees—"Oh! Lady Matilda," cried he, "if you knew the ſenſations of my heart, you would not treat me with this diſdain."

"We can only judge of thoſe ſenſations, Mr. Ruſhbrook," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "by the effect they have upon your conduct; and while you inſult Lord and Lady Elmwood's daughter by an intruſion like this, and then ridicule her abject ſtate by mockery, ſuch as the preſent"——

He flew from his knees inſtantly, and interrupted her, crying "What can I do?—What am I to ſay, to make you change your opinion of me?—While Lord Elmwood has been at home I have kept at an awful diſtance; and though every moment I breathed was a wiſh to caſt myſelf at his daughter's feet, yet as I feared, Miſs Woodley, you were incenſed againſt me, by what means was I to procure an interview but by ſtratagem or force?—This accident has given a third method, and I had not ſtrength, I had not courage, to let it

it paſs.—Lord Elmwood will ſoon return, and we may both be hurried to town immediately;—then how for a tedious winter could I ſuſtain the thought that I was deſpiſed, nay perhaps conſidered as an object of ingratitude, by the only child of my deceaſed benefactreſs."

Matilda replied with all her father's haughtineſs, "Depend upon it, Sir, if you ſhould ever enter my thoughts, it will only be as an object of envy."

"Suffer me then, Madam," ſaid he, "as an earneſt you do not think worſe of me than I merit, ſuffer me to be ſometimes admitted into your preſence."

She ſcarcely permitted him to finiſh the period, before ſhe replied, "This is the laſt time, Sir, we ſhall ever meet, depend upon it—unleſs, indeed, Lord Elmwood ſhould delegate to you the control of me—his commands I never diſpute." And here ſhe burſt into a flood of tears.

Ruſhbrook walked to the window, and did not ſpeak for a ſhort time—then turning

ing himſelf to make a reply, both Matilda and Miſs Woodley were ſomewhat ſurpriſed to ſee, he had ſhed tears too.—Having conquered them, he ſaid, "I will not offend you, Madam, by ſtaying one moment longer; and I give my honour, that, upon no pretence whatever, will I preſume to intrude here again.—Profeſſions, I find, have no weight, and only by this obedience to your orders can I give a proof of that reſpect which you inſpire;—and let the agitation I now feel, convince you, Lady Matilda, that, with all my ſeeming good fortune, I am not happier than yourſelf."—And ſo much was he agitated while he delivered this, it was with difficulty he came to the concluſion.—When he did, he bowed with reverence, as if he had left the preſence of a deity, and went away.

Matilda immediately entered the chamber ſhe had come from, and without caſting a ſingle look at Miſs Woodley, by which ſhe might gueſs of the opinion ſhe had formed

of Mr. Ruſhbrook's conduct.--The next time they met they did not even mention his name; for they were aſhamed to own any partiality in his favour, and were too juſt to bring any ſerious accuſation againſt him.

But Miſs Woodley the day following communicated the intelligence of this viſit to Mr. Sandford, who not being preſent, and a witneſs of thoſe marks of humility and reſpect which were conſpicuous in the deportment of Mr. Ruſhbrook, was highly offended at his preſumption; and threatened if he ever dared to force his company there again, he would acquaint Lord Elmwood with his arrogance, whatever might be the event.—Miſs Woodley however, aſſured him, ſhe believed he would have no cauſe for ſuch a complaint, as the young man had made the moſt ſolemn promiſe never to commit the like offence; and ſhe thought it her duty to enjoin Sandford, till he did repeat it, not to mention the circumſtance, even to Ruſhbrook himſelf.

Matilda

Matilda could not but feel a regard towards her father's heir in return for that which he had ſo fervently declared for her; yet the more favourable her opinion of his mind and manners, the more he became a proper object of her jealouſy for the affections of Lord Elmwood, and was now conſequently an object of greater ſorrow to her, than when ſhe believed him leſs worthy.—This, was the reverſe on his part towards her—no jealouſy intervened to bar his admiration and eſteem, and the beauty of her perſon, and grandeur of her mien, not only confirmed, but improved, the exalted idea he had formed of her previous to their meeting, and which his affection to both her parents had inſpired.——The next time he ſaw his benefactor, he began to feel a new eſteem and regard for him, for his daughter's ſake; as he had at firſt an eſteem for her on the foundation of his love for Lord and Lady Elmwood—He gazed with wonder at his uncle's inſenſibility to his own happineſs, and longed to

lead him to the jewel he caſt away, though even his own expulſion ſhould be the fatal conſequence.——Such was the youthful, warm, generous, grateful, but unthinking mind of Ruſhbrook.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER this incident, Miſs Woodley left her own apartments leſs frequently than before—ſhe was afraid, though till now miſtruſt had been a ſtranger to her heart, ſhe was afraid duplicity might be concealed under the apparent friendſhip of Ruſhbrook; it did not indeed appear ſo from any part of his behaviour, but ſhe was apprehenſive for the fate of Matilda; ſhe diſliked him alſo, and therefore ſhe ſuſpected him.—For near three weeks ſhe had not now paid a viſit to Lord Elmwood, and though to herſelf every viſit was a pain, yet as Matilda took a delight in hearing of her father, what he ſaid, what he did, what his attention ſeemed moſtly employed on, and a thouſand other circumſtantial informations, in the detail of which, Sandford

would ſcorn to be half ſo particular, it was a deprivation to her, Miſs Woodley did not go oftener.—Now to the middle of November had arrived, and it was expected his Lordſhip would ſhortly quit the country.

Partly therefore to indulge her hapleſs companion, and partly becauſe it was a neceſſary duty, Miſs Woodley paid his Lordſhip a morning viſit, and ſtaid dinner.—Ruſhbrook was officiouſly polite to her, (for that was the epithet ſhe gave his attention in relating it to Lady Matilda) yet ſhe owned he had not that forward impertinence ſhe had formerly diſcovered in him, but appeared much more grave and ſedate.

"But tell me of my father," ſaid Matilda.

"I was going, my dear—but don't be concerned—don't let it vex you."

"What? what?" cried Matilda, frightened by the preface.

"Why, on my obſerving that I thought Mr. Ruſhbrook looked paler than uſual, and appeared not to be in perfect health, which

(which was really the caſe) your father expreſſed the greateſt anxiety imaginable; he ſaid he could not bear to ſee him look ſo ill, begged him with all the tenderneſs of a parent to take the advice of a phyſician, and added a thouſand other affectionate things."

"I deteſt Mr. Ruſhbrook,"—ſaid Matilda, with her eyes flaſhing indignation.

"Nay, for ſhame," returned Miſs Woodley: "do you ſuppoſe I told you this, to make you hate him?"

"No, there was no occaſion for that," replied Matilda; "my ſentiments (though I have never before avowed them) were long ago formed; he was always an object which added to my unhappineſs; but ſince his daring intruſion into my apartments, he has been an object of my hatred."

"But now perhaps I may tell you ſomething to pleaſe you," cried Miſs Woodley.

"And what is that?" ſaid Matilda, with indifference; for the firſt intelligence had hurt her ſpirits too much to ſuffer her to liſten with pleaſure to any other.

"Mr. Ruſhbrook," continued Miſs Woodley, "replied to your father, his indiſpoſition was but a ſlight nervous fever, and he would defer a phyſician's advice till he went to London—on which his Lordſhip ſaid, "And when do you expect to be there?—he replied, "Within a week or two, I ſuppoſe, my Lord." But your father anſwered, "I do not mean to go myſelf till after Chriſtmas."—"No indeed, my Lord!" ſaid Mr. Sandford, with ſurpriſe: "you have not paſſed your Chriſtmas here," continued he, "theſe many a year." —"No," returned his Lordſhip; "but I think I feel myſelf more attached to this houſe at preſent, then ever I did in my life."

"You imagine then, my father thought of me, when he ſaid that?" cried Matilda eagerly.

"But I may be miſtaken," replied Miſs Woodley.—"I leave you to judge.—But I am ſure Mr. Sandford imagined he thought of you, for I ſaw a ſmile over his whole face immediately."

"Did

"Did you, Miſs Woodley?"

"Yes; it appeared on every feature except his lips; thoſe he cloſed faſt together, for fear Lord Elmwood ſhould perceive it."

Miſs Woodley with all her minute intelligence, did not however acquaint Matilda that Ruſhbrook followed her to the window while his Lordſhip was out of the room, and Sandford half aſleep at the other end of it, and inquired reſpectfully and anxiouſly for her Ladyſhip; adding, "It is my concern for Lady Matilda which makes me thus indiſpoſed: I ſuffer more than her; but I am not permitted to tell her ſo, nor can I hope, Miſs Woodley, you will."—She replied, "You are right, Sir." Nor did ſhe reveal this converſation, while not a ſentence that paſſed except that, was omitted.

When Chriſtmas arrived Lord Elmwood had many convivial days at Elmwood Houſe, but the name of Matilda was never mentioned by one of his gueſts, and moſt pro-

bably was never thought of.—During all thoſe holidays ſhe was unuſually melancholy, but ſunk into the deepeſt dejection when ſhe was told the day was fixed on which her father was to depart for the ſeaſon.—On the morning of that day ſhe wept inceſſantly; and all her conſolation was, "She would go to the chamber window which was fronting the door he was to paſs through to his carriage, and for the firſt time, and moſt likely for the laſt time of her life, behold him."

This deſign was ſoon forgot in another:—"She would ruſh boldly into the apartment where he was, and at his feet take leave of him for ever—She would lay hold of his hands, claſp his knees, provoke him to ſpurn her, which would be joy in compariſon to this cruel indifference."—In the bitterneſs of her grief, ſhe once called upon her mother, and reproached her memory—but the moment ſhe recollected the offence (which was almoſt inſtantaneouſly) ſhe became all mildneſs and reſignation. "What

have

have I ſaid?" cried ſhe; "Dear, dear ſaint, forgive me, and behold for your ſake I will bear all with patience—I will not groan, I will not even ſigh again—this taſk I ſet myſelf to attone for what I have dared to utter."

While Lady Matilda laboured under theſe variety of ſenſations, Miſs Woodley was occupied in bewailing and endeavouring to calm her ſorrows—and Lord Elmwood with Ruſhbrook, was prepared ready to ſet off.—His Lordſhip, however, loitered, and did not once ſeem in haſte to be gone.—When at laſt he got up to depart, Sandford thought he preſſed his hand, and ſhook it with more warmth than ever he had done in his life.---Encouraged by this ſuppoſition Sandford, with the tears ſtarting in his eyes, ſaid, "my Lord, won't you condeſcend to take your leave of Miſs Woodley?"—— "Certainly, Sandford," replied his Lordſhip, and ſeemed glad of an excuſe to ſit down again.

Impreſſed

Impreſſed with the idea of the ſtate in which ſhe had left his only child, Miſs Woodley, when ſhe came before Lord Elmwood to bid him farewell, was pale, trembling, and in tears.—Sandford, notwithſtanding his Lordſhip's apparent kind humour, was ſhocked at the conſtruction he muſt put upon her appearance, and cried "What, Miſs Woodley, are you not recovered of your illneſs yet." Lord Elmwood, however, took no notice of her looks, but after wiſhing her health and happineſs, walked ſlowly out of the houſe; turning back frequently and ſpeaking to Sandford or ſome other perſon who was behind him, as if part of his thoughts were left behind, and he went with reluctance.

When he had quitted the room where Miſs Woodley was; Ruſhbrook, timid before her, as ſhe had been before her benefactor, went up to her all humility, and ſaid, "Miſs Woodley, we ought to be friends; our concern, our devotion is paid to the ſame objects, and one common intereſt ſhould teach us to be friendly."

She

She made no reply.—" Will you permit me to write to you when I am away?" ſaid he; " You may wiſh to hear of Lord Elmwood's health, and of what changes may take place in his reſolutions—Will you permit me?"——At that moment a ſervant came and ſaid, " Sir, my Lord is in his carriage and waiting for you." He haſted away, and Miſs Woodley was relieved from the pain of giving him a denial.

No ſooner was the chariot, with all its attendants, out of ſight, than Lady Matilda was conducted by Miſs Woodley from her lonely retreat into that part of the houſe from whence her father had juſt departed—and ſhe viſited every ſpot where he had ſo long reſided, with a pleaſing curioſity that for a while diverted her grief.—In the breakfaſt and dining rooms ſhe leaned over thoſe ſeats with a kind of filial piety, on which ſhe was told he had been accuſtomed to ſit. And in the library ſhe took up with filial delight, the pen with which he had

had been writing; and looked with the moſt curious attention into thoſe books that were laid upon his reading deſk.—But a hat, lying on one of the tables, gave her a ſenſation beyond any other ſhe experienced on this occaſion—in that trifling article of his dreſs, ſhe thought ſhe ſaw he himſelf, and held it in her hand with pious reverence.

In the mean time, Lord Elmwood and Ruſhbrook were proceeding on their road with hearts not leſs heavy than thoſe which they had left at Elmwood Houſe, though neither of them could ſo well as Matilda tell the cauſe of the weight.

CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG as Lady Matilda was during the life of her mother, neither her youth, nor the recluſe ſtate in which ſhe lived, had precluded her from the notice and ſolicitations of a nobleman who had profeſſed himſelf her lover. Viſcount Margrave had an eſtate not far diſtant from the retreat Lady Elmwood had choſen, and being devoted to the ſports of the country, he ſeldom quitted it for any of thoſe joys which the town offered.—He was a young man, of a handſome perſon, and was what his neighbours ſtiled "A man of ſpirit."—He was an excellent fox-hunter, and as excellent a companion over his bottle at the end of the chace—he was prodigal of his fortune in all caſes where his pleaſures were concerned, and as thoſe pleaſures were moſtly ſocial, his ſporting companions and his miſtreſſes

treſſes (for theſe were alſo of the plural number) partook largely of his wealth.

Two months previous to Lady Elmwood's death, Miſs Woodley and Lady Matilda were taking their uſual walk in ſome fields and lanes near to their houſe, when chance threw Lord Margrave in their way, during a thunder ſtorm in which they were ſuddenly caught; and he had the ſatisfaction to convey his new acquaintances to their home in his carriage, ſafe from the fury of the elements—Grateful for the ſervice his Lordſhip had rendered them, Miſs Woodley and her charge permitted him to enquire occaſionally of their healths, and would ſometimes ſee him.—The ſtory of Lady Elmwood was known to Lord Margrave, and as he beheld her daughter with a paſſion ſuch as he had been unuſed to overcome, he indulged it with the probable hope, that on the death of the mother Lord Elmwood would receive his child, and perhaps accept him as his ſon-in-law.—Wedlock was not the plan which

Lord

Lord Margrave had ever propoſed to himſelf for happineſs; but the exceſs of his love on this new occaſion, ſubdued every reſolution he had taken againſt the marriage ſtate, and not daring to hope for the conſummation of his wiſhes by any other means, he ſuffered himſelf to look forward to that, as his only reſource.---No ſooner was the long-expected death of Lady Elmwood arrived, than his Lordſhip waited with impatience to hear Lady Matilda was ſent for and acknowledged by her father; for he meant to be the firſt to lay before Lord Elmwood his pretenſions as a ſuitor. ---But thoſe pretenſions were founded on the vague hopes of a lover only; and Miſs Woodley, to whom he firſt declared them, ſaid every thing poſſible to convince him of their falacioufneſs.---As to the object of his paſſion, ſhe was not only inſenſible, but totally inattentive to all that was ſaid to her on the ſubject.---Lady Elmwood died without ever being diſturbed with it; for her daughter did not even remember his propoſals

ſals ſo as to repeat them again, and Miſs Woodley thought it prudent to conceal from her friend, every new incident which might give her cauſe for freſh anxieties.

When Sandford and the ladies left the north and came to Elmwood houſe, ſo much were their thoughts employed with other ideas, Lord Margrave did not occupy a place; and during the whole time they had been at their new abode, they had never once heard of him.—He had, nevertheleſs, his whole mind fixed upon Lady Matilda, and placed ſpies in the neighbourhood to inform him of every circumſtance in her ſituation.—Having imbibed an averſion to matrimony, he heard with but little regret, that there was no proſpect of her ever becoming her father's heir; while ſuch an information gave him the hope of obtaining her, upon the illegal terms of a miſtreſs.

Lord Elmwood's departure to town forwarded this hope, and flattering himſelf that the humiliating ſituation in which Matilda

tilda muſt feel herſelf in the houſe of her father, might gladly induce her to take ſhelter under any other protection, he boldly advanced as ſoon as the Earl was gone, to make ſuch overtures as his wiſhes and his vanity told him, could not be rejected.

Inquiring for Miſs Woodley, he eaſily gained admittance; but at the ſight of ſo much modeſty, and dignity in the perſon of Matilda, ſo much good will, and yet ſuch circumſpection in her companion; and the good ſenſe and proper ſpirit which were always apparent in the manners of Sandford, his Lordſhip fell once more into the deſpondency, of becoming to Lady Matilda nothing more important to his reputation, than a huſband.

Even that humble hope was, however, ſometimes denied him, while Sandford ſet forth the impropriety of troubling Lord Elmwood on ſuch a ſubject at preſent; and while the Viſcount's penetration, ſmall as it was, diſcovered in his fair one much more to diſcourage than to favour his wiſh-

es.

es.—Plunged, however, too deep in his paſſion to emerge from it in haſte, he meant ſtill to viſit, and wait for a change to happier circumſtances, when he was peremptorily deſired by Mr. Sandford to deſiſt from ever coming again.

"Wherefore Mr. Sandford?" cried his Lordſhip.

"For two reaſons, my Lord;—in the firſt place, your viſits might be diſpleaſing to Lord Elmwood;—in the next place, I know they are ſo to his daughter."

Unaccuſtomed to be ſpoken to ſo plainly, particularly in a caſe where his heart was intereſted, his Lordſhip nevertheleſs ſubmitted with patience; but in his own mind determined how long this patience ſhould continue—no longer than it ſerved as the means to prove his obedience, and by that artifice, ſecure his better reception at ſome future period.

On his return home, cheered with the huzzas of his jovial companions, he began to conſult thoſe friends, what ſcheme was beſt

beſt to be adopted for the accompliſhment of his deſires.—Some, boldly adviſed application to the father, in defiance to the old prieſt; but that was the very laſt method his Lordſhip himſelf approved, as marriage muſt inevitably have followed Lord Elmwood's conſent; beſides, though a Peer, Lord Margrave was unuſed to rank with Peers; and even the neceſſary formality of an interview with one of his equals, carried along with it a terror, or at leaſt a fatigue, to a ruſtic Baron.—Others, of his companions adviſed ſeduction; but happily his Lordſhip poſſeſſed no arts of this kind to affect a heart appendant to ſuch a mind as Matilda's.—There were not wanting among his moſt favourite counſellors ſome who painted the triumph and gratification of force; thoſe aſſured him there was nothing to apprehend under this head; as from the behaviour of Lord Elmwood to his child, it was more than probable he would be utterly indifferent to any violence that might be offered her.—This laſt advice

vice ſeemed inſpired by the aid of wine; and no ſooner had the wine freely circulated, than this was always the ſcheme which appeared by far the beſt.

While Lord Margrave alternately cheriſhed his hopes and his fears in the country, Ruſhbrook in town gave way to his fears only—every day of his life made him more acquainted with the firm, unſhaken temper of Lord Elmwood, and every day whiſpered more forcibly to his own heart, that pity, gratitude, and friendſhip, ſtrong and affectionate as theſe paſſions are, are weak and cold to that, which had gained the poſſeſſion of him—he doubted, but he did not long doubt, that which he felt was love.—"And yet," ſaid he to himſelf, "it is love of that kind, which ariſing from cauſes independant of the object itſelf, can ſcarcely deſerve this ſacred title—Did I not love Lady Matilda before I beheld her?—for her mother's ſake I loved her—and even for her father's.—Should I have felt the ſame affection for her, had ſhe been the child

child of other parents?—no. Or ſhould I have felt that ſympathetic tenderneſs which now preys upon my health, had not her misfortunes excited it?—no."—Yet the love which is the reſult of gratitude and pity only, he thought had little claim to rank with his; and after the moſt deliberate and deep reflection, he concluded with this deciſive opinion—He had loved Lady Matilda, in *whatever ſtate*, in *whatever circumſtances*; and that the tenderneſs he felt towards her, and the anxiety for her happineſs before he knew her, extreme as they were, were yet cool and diſpaſſionate ſenſations, compared to that which her perſon and demeanour had incited—and though he acknowledged, that by thoſe preceding ſentiments his heart was ſoftened, prepared, and moulded, as it were, to receive this laſt impreſſion, yet the violence of his paſſion told him genuine love, if not the baſis on which it was founded, had been the certain conſequence.—With a ſtrict ſcrutiny into his heart he ſought this knowledge,

knowledge, but arrived at it with a regret that amounted to deſpair.

To ſhield him from deſpondency, he formed in his mind a thouſand projects, depicting the joys of his union with Lady Matilda; but her father's implacability ſtood foremoſt and confounded them all—His Lordſhip was a man who made but few reſolutions—thoſe were the effect of deliberation; and as he was not the leaſt capricious or inconſtant in his temper, they were reſolutions which no probable event could ſhake.—Love, that produces wonders, that ſeduces and ſubdues the moſt determined and rigid ſpirits, had in two inſtances overcome the inflexibility of Lord Elmwood; he married Lady Elmwood contrary to his determination, becauſe he loved; and for the ſake of this beloved object, he had, contrary to his reſolution, taken under his immediate care young Ruſhbrook; but the magic which once enchanted away this ſpirit of immutability was no more—Lady Elmwood was no more, and the charm was broken.

As

As Miſs Woodley was deprived the opportunity of deſiring Ruſhbrook not to write when he aſked her the permiſſion, he paſſed one whole morning in the gratification of forming and writing a letter to her, which he thought might poſſibly be ſhewn to Matilda.—As he durſt not touch upon any of thoſe circumſtances in which he was the moſt intereſted, that, joined to the reſpect he wiſhed to pay the lady to whom he wrote, limited his letter to about twenty lines; yet the ſtudious manner with which theſe lines were dictated, the hope and fear they might, or might not, be ſeen and regarded by Lady Matilda, rendered the taſk an anxiety ſo pleaſing, he could have wiſhed it to have laſted for a year; and in all this magnifying of trifles was diſcoverable, the never-failing ſymptom of ardent love.

A reply to this formal addreſs was a reward he wiſhed for with impatience, but he wiſhed in vain; and in the midſt of his chagrin at the diſappointment, a ſorrow little thought of, occurred, and gave him a

perturbation of mind he had never before experienced.—Lord Elmwood propoſed a wife to him; and in a way ſo aſſured of his acquieſcence, that if Ruſhbrook's life had depended upon his daring to diſpute his benefactor's will, he would not have had the courage to have done ſo. There was, however, in his reply, and his embarraſſment, ſomething which his Lordſhip diſcerned from a free concurrence; and looking ſtedfaſtly at him, he ſaid, in that ſtern manner which he now almoſt conſtantly adopted,

"You have no engagements, I ſuppoſe? Have made no previous promiſes?"

"None on earth, my Lord," replied Ruſhbrook candidly.

"Nor have you diſpoſed of your heart?"

"No, my Lord," replied he; but not candidly,—nor with the appearance of candour: for though he ſpoke haſtily, it was rather like a man frightened than aſſured.—He hurried to tell the falſehood he thought himſelf obliged to tell, that the pain and ſhame might be over; but there

Ruſhbrook

Ruſhbrook was deceived; the lie once told was as troubleſome as in the conception, and added to his firſt confuſion, an encreaſing one.

Lord Elmwood now fixed his eyes upon him with a ſullen contempt, and riſing from his ſeat, ſaid, "Ruſhbrook if you have been ſo inconſiderate as to give away your heart, tell me ſo at once, and tell me the object."

Ruſhbrook ſhuddered at the thought.

"I here," continued his Lordſhip, "tolerate the firſt untruth you ever told me as the falſe aſſertion of a lover; and give you an opportunity to recall it---but after this moment, it is a lie between man and man---a lie to your friend and father, and I will not forgive it."

Ruſhbrook ſtood ſilent, confuſed, alarmed, and bewildered in his thoughts.---His Lordſhip reſumed,

"Name the perſon, if there is any ſuch, on whom you have beſtowed your heart; and though I do not give you the ſmalleſt hope I ſhall not cenſure your folly, I will at

leaſt not reproach you for having at firſt denied it."

To repeat theſe words in writing, the reader muſt condemn the young man that he could heſitate to own he loved, if he was even afraid to name the object of his paſſion; but his Lordſhip in his queſtion had made the two anſwers inſeparable, and all evaſions of the ſecond, Ruſhbrook knew would be fruitleſs, after having avowed the firſt—and how could he confeſs the latter? The abſolute orders he received from the ſteward on his firſt return from his travels, were, "Never to mention his daughter, any more than his late wife, before Lord Elmwood."—The fault of having rudely intruded into Lady Matilda's preſence, ruſhed too upon his mind; for he did not even dare to ſay, by what means he had beheld her.—But more than all, the threatening manner, in which his Lordſhip uttered this rational and ſeeming conciliating ſpeech, the menaces, the ſeverity which ſat upon his countenance while he delivered

delivered thoſe moderate words, might have intimidated a man wholly independent, and leſs uſed to fear him than his nephew had been.

"You make no anſwer, Sir," ſaid his Lordſhip, after waiting a few moments for his reply.

"I have only to ſay, my Lord," returned Ruſhbrook, "that although my heart may be totally diſengaged, I may yet be diſinclined to the proſpect of marriage."

"May! May! Your heart *may* be diſengaged," repeated his Lordſhip. "Do you dare to reply to me equivocally, when I have aſked a poſitive anſwer?"

"Perhaps I am not poſitive myſelf, my Lord; but I will inquire the ſtate of my mind, and make you acquainted with it very ſoon."

As the angry demeanour of his uncle affected Ruſhbrook with fear, ſo that fear, powerfully (but with proper manlineſs) expreſſed, again ſoftened the diſpleaſure of Lord Elmwood; and ſeeing and pitying

his nephew's ſenſibility, he now changed his auſtere voice, and ſaid mildly, but firmly,

"I give you a week to conſult with yourſelf; at the expiration of that time I ſhall talk with you again, and I command you to be then prepared to ſpeak, not only without deceit, but without heſitation." He left the room at theſe words, and left Ruſhbrook releaſed from a fate which his apprehenſions had beheld impending that moment.

He had now a week to call his thoughts together, to weigh every circumſtance, and to determine whether implicity to ſubmit to his Lordſhip's recommendation for a wife, or revolt from it, and ſee ſome other more ſubſervient to his will, appointed his heir.

Undetermined how to act upon this great trial which was to decide his future deſtiny, Ruſhbrook ſuffered ſo poignant an uncertainty, that he became at length ill, and before the end of the week which his uncle had allotted him for his reply, he was con-

fined

fined to his bed in a high fever.—His Lordſhip was extremely affected at his indiſpoſition; he gave him every care he could beſtow, and even a great deal of his perſonal attendance.—This laſt favour had a claim upon the young man's gratitude, ſuperior to every other obligation which ſince his infancy his benefactor had conferred; and he was at times ſo moved by thoſe marks of kindneſs he received from Lord Elmwood, he would form the intention of tearing from his heart every trace Lady Matilda had left there, and as ſoon as his health permitted him, obey to the utmoſt of his views, every wiſh his uncle had conceived.—Yet again, Matilda's pitiable ſituation preſented itſelf to his compaſſion, and her beauteous perſon to his love.—Divided between the claims of obligation to the father, and tender attachment to the daughter, his ſickneſs was increaſed by the tortures of his mind, and he once ſincerely wiſhed for that death, of which he was in danger, to free him from the dilemma into which his affections had involved him.

At the time his illneſs was at its height, and he lay complaining of the violence of his fever, Lord Elmwood, taking his hand aſked him, "If there was any thing he could do for him?"

"Yes, yes, my Lord, a great deal," he replied eagerly.

"What is it, Harry?" aſked his Lordſhip kindly.

"Oh! my Lord," replied he, "that is what I muſt not tell you."

"Defer it then till you are well," ſaid his Lordſhip, fearful of being ſurprized, or affected by the ſtate of his health, into any promiſes which he might hereafter find the impropriety of granting.

"And when I recover, My Lord, you give me leave to reveal to you, that which I wiſh you to comply with, let it be what it will?"

His Lordſhip heſitated——but ſeeing an anxiety for the anſwer, by his raiſing himſelf upon his elbow in the bed and ſtaring wildly, Lord Elmwood at laſt ſaid "Certainly

tainly—Yes, yes," as a child is anſwered for its quiet.

That Lord Elmwood could have no idea what was the real petition which Ruſhbrook meant to preſent him is certain; but it is certain he expected he had ſome requeſt to make, with which it might be wrong for him to comply, and therefore he avoided hearing what it was; for great as his compaſſion for him in his preſent ſtate, it was not of force to urge him to give a promiſe he did not mean to perform.—Ruſhbrook on his part was pleaſed with the aſſurance he might ſpeak when he was reſtored to health, but no ſooner was his fever abated and his ſenſes perfectly recovered from the ſlight derangement his malady had cauſed, than the lively remembrance of what he had hinted alarmed him, and he was even afraid to look his kind, but awful relation in the face.—Lord Elmwood's cheerfulneſs, however, on his returning health, and his undiminiſhed attention, ſoon convinced him he had nothing to fear—But, alas!

he found too, he had nothing to hope.—As his health re-eſtabliſhed his wiſhes re-eſtabliſhed alſo, and with his wiſhes his deſpair.

Convinced now that his nephew had ſomething on his mind which he feared to reveal, his Lordſhip no longer doubted but ſome youthful attachment had armed his heart againſt any marriage he ſhould propoſe; but he had ſo much pity for his preſent weak ſtate, to delay that farther inquiry which he had threatened before his ſickneſs, to a time when he ſhould be wholly reſtored.

It was the end of May before Ruſhbrook was able to be preſent and partake in the uſual routine of the day—the country was now preſcribed him as the means of entire reſtoration; and as Lord Elmwood deſigned to leave London ſome time in June, he adviſed him to go to Elmwood Houſe a week or two before him;—this advice was received with delight, and a letter was ſent to Mr. Sandford to prepare for Mr. Ruſhbrook's arrival.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XII.

DURING the illneſs of Ruſhbrook, news had been ſent of his danger from the ſervants in town to thoſe at Elmwood Houſe, and Lady Matilda expreſſed compaſſion when ſhe was told of it – ſhe began to conceive the inſtant ſhe thought he would ſoon die, that his viſit to her had ſome merit rather than impertinence in its deſign, and that he might poſſibly be a more deſerving man than ſhe had ſuppoſed him to be. Even Sandford and Miſs Woodley began to recollect qualifications he poſſeſſed, which they never had reflected on before, and Miſs Woodley in particular reproached herſelf that ſhe had been ſo ſevere and inattentive to him.—Notwithſtanding the proſpects his death pointed out to her, it was with infinite joy ſhe heard he was recover-

ed;

ed; nor was Sandford leſs ſatisfied; for he had treated the young man too unkindly not to dread, leſt any ill ſhould befall him; —but although he was glad to hear of his reſtored health, when he was informed he was coming to Elmwood Houſe for a few weeks in the ſtyle of its maſter, Sandford, with all his religious and humane principles, could not help thinking, "that provided the lad had been properly prepared, he had been as well out of the world as in it."

He was ſtill leſs his friend when he ſaw him arrive with his uſual florid appearance: had he come pale and ſickly, Sandford had been kind to him; but in apparent good health and ſpirits, he could not form his mouth to tell him he was "glad to ſee him."

On his arrival, Matilda, who for five months had been at large, ſecluded herſelf as ſhe would have done upon the arrival of Lord Elmwood; but with far different ſenſations.—Notwithſtanding her reſtriction on the latter occaſion, the reſidence of her father

father in that houſe had been a ſource of pleaſure, rather than of ſorrow to her; but from the abode of Ruſhbrook ſhe derived puniſhment alone.

When, from inquiries made to his own ſervant, who inquired again, Ruſhbrook found that on his approach Matilda had retired to her own confined apartments, the thought was torture to him; it was the hope of ſeeing and converſing with her, of being admitted at all times to her ſociety as the miſtreſs of the houſe, that had raiſed his ſpirits, and effected his perfect cure, beyond any other cauſe; and he was hurt to the greateſt degree at this reſpect, or rather contempt, ſhown to him by her retreat.

It was, nevertheleſs, a ſubject too delicate to touch upon in any one ſenſe—an invitation for her company on his part, might carry the appearance of ſuperior authority, and an affected condeſcenſion, which he juſtly conſidered as the worſt of all inſults. --And yet, how could he ſupport the idea that his viſit had placed the daughter of his benefactor

benefactor as a dependant ſtranger in that houſe, where in reality he was the dependant, and ſhe the lawful heir.—For two or three days he ſuffered the torments of theſe reflections, hoping to come to an explanation of all he felt by a fortunate meeting with Miſs Woodley; but when that meeting occurred, although he obſerved ſhe talked to him with leſs reſerve than ſhe had formerly done, and even gave ſome proofs of the goodneſs of her diſpoſition, yet ſhe ſcrupulouſly avoided naming Lady Matilda; and when he diffidently enquired of her Ladyſhip's health, a cold reſtraint ſpread over Miſs Woodley's face, and ſhe left him inſtantly.---To Sandford it was ſtill more difficult to apply; for though they were frequently together, they were never ſociable; and as Sandford ſeldom diſguiſed his feelings, to Ruſhbrook he was always extremely ſevere, and ſometimes unmannerly.

In this perplexed ſituation, the country air was rather of detriment than ſervice to the invalid; and had he not, like a true lo-

ver,

ver, held faſt to hope, while he could perceive nothing but deſpair; he had returned to town, rather than by his ſtay placed in a ſubordinate ſtate the object of his adoration.—But ſtill perſiſting in his hopes, he one morning met Miſs Woodley in the garden, engaged her a longer time than uſual in converſation, and at laſt obtained her promiſe "She would that day dine with him and Mr. Sandford."—But no ſooner had ſhe parted from him than ſhe repented of her conſent and upon communicating it to Matilda, that young lady, for the firſt time in her life, darted upon her kind companion, a look of the moſt cutting reproach and haughty reſentment.—Miſs Woodley's own ſentiments had upbraided her before; but ſhe was not prepared to receive ſo pointed a mark of diſapprobation from her young friend, till now, duteous and humble to her as to a mother, and not leſs affectionate. Her heart was too ſuſceptible to bear this diſreſpectful and contumelious frown from the object of her long-devoted care and concern; the tears inſtantly

inſtantly covered her face, and ſhe laid her hands upon her heart, as if ſhe thought it would break.—Matilda was moved, but ſhe poſſeſſed too much of the manly reſentment of her father, to diſcover what ſhe felt for the firſt few minutes.—Miſs Woodley, who had given ſo many tears to her ſorrows, but never till now, one to her anger, had a ſtill deeper ſenſe of this indifference, than of the anger itſelf, and to conceal what ſhe ſuffered, left the room.—Matilda, who had been till this time working at her needle, ſeemingly compoſed, now let her work drop from her hand, and ſat for a little while in a deep reverie.—At length ſhe roſe up, and followed Miſs Woodley to the other apartment.—She entered grave, majeſtic, and apparently ſerene, while her poor heart fluttered with a thouſand diſtreſſing ſenſations.—She approached Miſs Woodley (who was ſtill in tears) with a ſullen ſilence; and awed by her manners the faithful friend of her deceaſed mother exclaimed, "Dear Lady Matilda, think no more on what I have done

— do

—do not reſent it any longer, and on my knees I'll beg your pardon." Miſs Woodley roſe as ſhe uttered theſe laſt words; but Matilda laid faſt hold of her to prevent the poſture ſhe offered to take, and inſtantly aſſumed it herſelf. "Oh, let this be my atonement!" ſhe cried with the moſt earneſt ſupplication.

They interchanged forgiveneſs; and as this reconciliation was ſincere, they each without reſerve gave their opinion upon the ſubject which had cauſed the miſunderſtanding; and it was agreed that an apology ſhould be ſent to Mr. Ruſhbrook, "That Miſs Woodley had been ſuddenly indiſpoſed." Nor could this be ſaid to differ from the truth, for ſince what had paſſed ſhe was unfit to pay a viſit.

Ruſhbrook, who had been all the morning elated with the advance he ſuppoſed he had made in that lady's favour, was highly diſappointed, vext, and angry when this apology was delivered to him; nor did he, nor perhaps could he, conceal what he felt, although

although his ſevere obſerver, Mr. Sandford, was preſent.

"I am a very unfortunate man," ſaid he, as ſoon as the ſervant was gone who brought the meſſage.

Sandford caſt his eyes upon him with a look of ſurpriſe and contempt.

"A very unfortunate man indeed, Mr. Sandford," repeated he, "although you treat my complaint contemptuouſly."

Sandford made no reply, and ſeemed above making one.

They ſat down to dinner;—Ruſhbrook eat ſcarce any thing, but drank frequently; Sandford took no notice of either, but had a book (which was his cuſtom when he dined with perſons whoſe converſation was not intereſting to him) laid by the ſide of his plate, which he occaſionally looked into, as the diſhes were removing, or other opportunities ſerved.

Ruſhbrook, juſt now more hopeleſs than ever of forming an acquaintance with Lady Matilda, began to give way to the ſymptoms

toms of deſpair; and they made their firſt attack by urging him to treat on the ſame level of familiarity that he himſelf was treated, Mr. Sandford, to whom he had till now ever behaved with the moſt profound tokens of reſpect.

"Come," ſaid he to him as ſoon as the dinner was removed, "Lay aſide your book and be good company."

Sandford lifted up his eyes upon him—ſtared in his face—and caſt them on the book again.

"I ſay," continued Ruſhbrook, "I want a companion; and as Miſs Woodley has diſappointed me, I muſt have your company."

Sandford now laid down his book upon the table, but ſtill holding his fingers in the pages he was reading, ſaid, "And why are you diſappointed of Miſs Woodley's company?—When people expect what they have no right to hope for, they have yet the aſſurance to complain they are diſappointed."

"I had

"I had a right to expect ſhe would come," anſwered Ruſhbrook, "for ſhe promiſed ſhe would.

"But what right had you to aſk her?"

"The right every one has, to make his time paſs as agreeably as he can."

"But not at the expence of another."

"I believe, Mr. Sandford, it would be a heavy expence to you, to ſee me happy; I believe it would coſt you even your own happineſs."

"That is a price I have not now to give," replied Sandford, and he began reading again.

"What, you have already paid it away? No wonder that at your time of life it ſhould be gone.—But what do you think of my having already ſquandered mine?"

"I don't think about you." returned Sandford, without taking his eyes from the book.

"Can you look me in the face and ſay that, Mr. Sandford?—No, you cannot—for you know you *do* think of me, and you know

know you hate me."——Here he drank two glaſſes of wine one after another; "And I can tell you why you hate me." continued he: "It is from a cauſe for which I often hate myſelf."

Sandford read on.

"It is on Lady Matilda's account you hate me, and uſe me thus."

Sandford put down his book haſtily, and put both his hands by his ſide.

"Yes," reſumed Ruſhbrook, "you think I am wronging her."

"I think you groſſly inſult her," exclaimed Sandford, "by this rude mention of her name; and I command you at your peril to deſiſt."

"At my peril! Mr. Sandford? Do you aſſume the authority of Lord Elmwood?"

"I do on this occaſion; and if you dare to give your tongue a freedom"——

Ruſhbrook interrupted him—"Why then I boldly ſay, (and as her friend you ought rather to applaud than reſent it) I boldly ſay, my heart ſuffers ſo much for her ſituation

ſituation, I am regardleſs of my own.—I love her father—I loved her mother more—but ſhe herſelf beyond either."

"Hold your licentious tongue," cried Sandford, "or quit the room."

"Licentious? Oh! the pure thoughts that dwell in her innocent mind, are not leſs ſenſual than mine towards her.—Do you upbraid me with my reſpect, my pity for her? Theſe are the ſenſations which impel me to ſpeak thus undiſguiſed, even to you, my open—no, even worſe—my ſecret enemy!"

"Inſult *me* as you pleaſe, Mr. Ruſhbrook,—but beware how you mention Lord Elmwood's daughter."

"Can it be to her diſhonour that I pity her? that I would quit the houſe this moment never to return, ſo ſhe ſupplied the place I withhold from her."

"Go, then," cried Sandford.

"It would be of no uſe to her, or I would.—But come, Mr. Sandford, I will dare do as much as you.—Only ſecond me, and I will

will entreat Lord Elmwood to be reconciled—to ſee and own her."

"Your vanity would be equal to your raſhneſs.—You entreat?—She muſt greatly eſteem thoſe parental favours which your entreaties gained her!—Do you forget, young man, how ſhort a time it is, ſince you were intreated for?"

"I prove I do not, while this anxiety for Lady Matilda, ariſes from what I feel on that account."

"Remove your anxiety, then, from her to yourſelf; for were I to let Lord Elmwood know what has paſſed now"—

"It is for your own ſake, not for mine, if you don't."

"You ſhall not dare me to it, Mr. Ruſhbrook."—And he roſe from his ſeat: "You ſhall not dare me to do you an injury.—But to avoid the temptation, I will never again come into your company, unleſs my friend Lord Elmwood is preſent, to protect me and his child from your inſults."

Ruſhbrook roſe in yet more warmth than Sandford. "Have you the injuſtice to ſay I have inſulted Lady Matilda?"

"To ſpeak of her at all, is in you an inſult.—But you have done more—you dared to viſit her—to force into her preſence and ſhock her with your offers of ſervices which ſhe ſcorns; and of your compaſſion which ſhe is far above."

"Did ſhe complain to you?"

"She, or her friend did."

"I rather ſuppoſe, Mr. Sandford, you have bribed ſome of the ſervants to reveal this."

"The ſuſpicion becomes Lord Elmwood's heir."

"It becomes the man who lives in a houſe with you."

"I thank you, Mr. Ruſhbrook, for what has paſſed this day—it has taken a weight off my mind.—I thought my diſinclination to you, might perhaps ariſe from prejudice—this converſation has relieved me from thoſe fears, and I thank you."—Saying this

this he calmly walked out of the room, and left Ruſhbrook to reflect on what he had been doing.

Heated with the wine he had drank, (and which Sandford engaged on his book had not obſerved) no ſooner was he alone, than he became at once cool and repentant.—"What had he done?" was the firſt queſtion to himſelf.—"He had offended Sandford."—The man whom reaſon as well as prudence had ever taught him to treat with reſpect and even reverence.—He had groſſly offended the firm friend of Lady Matilda, and even by the unreſerved, the wanton uſe of her name.—All the retorts he had uttered came now to his memory; with a total forgetfulneſs of all Sandford had ſaid to provoke them.

He once thought to follow him and beg his pardon; but the contempt with which he had been treated, more than all the anger, withheld him.

As he ſat forming plans how to retrieve the opinion, ill as it was, which Sandford

formerly entertained of him, he received a letter from Lord Elmwood, kindly enquiring after his health, and ſaying he ſhould be down early in the following week.—Never were the friendly expreſſions of his Lordſhip half ſo welcome to him; for they ſerved to ſooth his imagination, racked with Sandford's wrath and his own diſpleaſure.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Sandford acted deliberately he always acted up to his duty; it was his duty to forgive Ruſhbrook and he did ſo—but he had declared he would never "be again in his company unleſs Lord Elmwood was preſent;—and with all his forgiveneſs, he found an unforgiving gratification, in the duty, of being obliged to keep his word.

The next day Ruſhbrook dined alone, while Sandford gave his company to the ladies.—Ruſhbrook was too proud to ſeek to reconcile Sandford with abject conceſſions, but he endeavoured to meet him as by accident and try what, in ſuch a caſe, a ſubmiſſive apology might effect.—For a day or two, all the ſchemes he formed on that head proved fruitleſs; he could never procure

even a ſight of him.—But on the evening of the third day, taking a lonely walk, he turned the corner of a grove, and ſaw in the very path he was going, Sandford accompanied by Miſs Woodley; and, what agitated him much more, Lady Matilda was with them. He knew not whether to proceed, or to quit the path and palpably ſhun them. To one who ſeemed to put an unkind conſtruction upon all he ſaid and did, he knew to do either, would be to do wrong.—In ſpite of the propenſity he felt to paſs ſo near to Lady Matilda, could he have known what conduct would have been deemed the moſt reſpectful, whatever painful denial it had coſt him, that, he would have adopted.—But undetermined whether to go forward, or croſs to another path, he ſtill walked on till he came too nigh to recede; he then, with a diffidence not affected, but felt in the moſt powerful degree, pulled off his hat; and without bowing, ſtood ſilently while the company paſſed.—Sandford walked on ſome paces before, and took no farther notice as he went

went by him, than juſt touching the fore part of his hat with his finger.—Miſs Woodley curtſied as ſhe followed.——But Lady Matilda made a full ſtop, and ſaid, in the gentleſt accents, "I hope, Mr. Ruſhbrook, you are perfectly recovered."

It was the ſweeteſt muſic he ever liſtened to; and he returned with the moſt reſpectful bow, "I am better a great deal, Ma'am," and purſued his way as if he did not dare to utter another ſyllable.

Sandford ſeldom found fault with Lady Matilda; not becauſe he loved her, but becauſe ſhe ſeldom did wrong—upon this occaſion, however, he was half inclined to reprimand her; but yet he did not know what to ſay—the ſubſequent humility of Ruſhbrook had taken from the indiſcretion of her ſpeaking to him, and the event could by no means juſtify his cenſure.—On hearing her begin to ſpeak Sandford had ſtopped; and as Ruſhbrook after replying, walked away, Sandford called to her croſſly, "Come, come along." But at the ſame

time he put out his elbow for her to take hold of his arm.

She haſtened her ſteps, and did ſo—then turning to Miſs Woodley, ſhe ſaid, "I expected you would have ſpoken to Mr. Ruſhbrook; it might have prevented me."

Miſs Woodley replied, "I was at a loſs what to do; when we met formerly, he always ſpoke firſt."

"And ought now," cried Sandford angrily—and then added, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, "It is certainly the duty of the ſuperior, to be the firſt who ſpeaks."

"He did not look as if he thought himſelf our ſuperior," replied Matilda.

"No," returned Sandford, "ſome people can put on what looks they pleaſe."

"Then while he looks ſo pale," replied Matilda, "and ſo dejected, I can never forbear ſpeaking to him when we meet, whatever he may think of it."

"And were he and I to meet a hundred, nay a thouſand times," replied Sandford,

ford, "I don't think I ſhall ever ſpeak to him again."

"Bleſs me! what for, Mr. Sandford?" cried Matilda—for Sandford, who was not a man that repeated little incidents, had never mentioned the circumſtance of their quarrel.

"I have taken ſuch a reſolution,"—anſwered he, "yet I bear him no enmity."

As this ſhort reply indicated he meant to ſay no more, no more was aſked; and the ſubject dropped.

In the mean time, Ruſhbrook, happier than he had been for months; intoxicated with joy at that voluntary mark of civility he had received from Lady Matilda, felt his heart ſo joyous, ſo free from every particle of malice, that he reſolved in the humbleſt manner, to make attonement for the breach of decorum he had lately been guilty of to Mr. Sandford.

Too happy at this time to ſuffer a mortification from any treatment he might receive, he ſent his ſervant to him into his ſtudy, as ſoon as he was returned home, to

beg to know "If he might be permitted to wait upon him, with a meſſage he had to deliver from Lord Elmwood."

The ſervant returned—"Mr. Sandford deſired he would ſend the meſſage by him, or the houſe ſteward." This was highly affronting; but Ruſhbrook was not in a humour to be offended, and he ſent again, begging he would admit him;—but the anſwer was, "he was buſy."

Thus defeated in his hopes of reconciliation, his new tranſports felt an allay, and the few days that remained before Lord Elmwood came, he paſſed in ſolitary muſing, and ineffectual walks and looks towards that path where he had met Matilda—ſhe came that way no more—nor indeed ſcarce quitted her apartment, in the practice of that confinement ſhe had to experience on the arrival of her father.

All her former agitations now returned. On the day he arrived ſhe wept—all the night ſhe did not ſleep—and the name of Ruſhbrook again became hateful to her.—His Lordſhip came in extreme good health and

and ſpirits, but appeared concerned to find Ruſhbrook leſs well than when he went from town.—Sandford was now under the neceſſity of being in Ruſhbrook's company, yet he took care never to ſpeak to him but when he was obliged; or to look at him but when he could not help it.—Lord Elmwood obſerved this conduct, yet he neither wondered, or was offended at it—he had always perceived what little eſteem Sandford had ſhowed his nephew from his firſt return; but he forgave in Sandford's humour a thouſand faults he would forgive in no other; nor did he deem this one of his greateſt faults, knowing the claim to his partiality from another object.

Miſs Woodley waited on Lord Elmwood as formerly; dined with him, and as heretofore related to the attentive Matilda all that paſſed.

About this time Lord Margrave, deprived by the ſeaſon of all the ſports of the field, felt his love for Matilda (which had been extreme while divided with the love of hunting) too violent to be ſubdued; and

he reſolved, though reluctantly, to apply to her father for his conſent to their union; —but writing to Sandford this reſolution, he was once more repulſed, and charged as a man of honour, to forbear to diſturb the tranquility of the family by any application of the kind.—To this Sandford received no anſwer; for his Lordſhip, highly incenſed at his miſtreſs's repugnance to him, determined more firmly than ever, to conſult his own happineſs alone; and as that depended merely upon his obtaining her, he cared not by what method it was effected.

About a fortnight after Lord Elmwood came into the country, as he was riding one morning, his horſe fell with him, and cruſhed his leg in ſo unfortunate a manner, as to be pronounced of dangerous conſequence.—He was brought home in a poſt chaiſe, and Matilda heard of the accident with more grief than would, on ſuch an occcaſion, appertain to the moſt fondled child.

In conſequence of the pain he ſuffered his fever was one night very high; and

Sandford

Sandford, who ſeldom quitted his apartment, went frequently to his bed-ſide; every time with the ſecret hope he ſhould hear him aſk to ſee his daughter—he was every time diſappointed; yet he ſaw him ſhake with a cordial friendſhip the hand of Ruſhbrook, as if he delighted in ſeeing thoſe he loved.

The danger in which Lord Elmwood was ſuppoſed to be, was but of ſhort duration, and his ſudden recovery ſucceeded.—Matilda who had wept, moaned, and watched during the criſis of his illneſs, when ſhe heard he was amending, exclaimed (with a kind of ſurpriſe at the novelty of the ſenſation) "And this is joy that I feel!—Oh! I never till now knew, what thoſe perſons felt that experienced joy."

Nor did ſhe repine, like Mr. Sandford and Miſs Woodley, at her father's inattention to her during his malady, for ſhe did not hope like them—ſhe did not hope he would behold her, even in dying.

But notwithſtanding his Lordſhip's ſeeming indifference while his indiſpoſition continued, no ſooner was he recovered ſo as

to

to receive the congratulations of his friends, than there was no one perſon he evidently ſhewed ſo much ſatisfaction at ſeeing, as Miſs Woodley.—She waited upon him timorouſly, and with more than ordinary diſtaſte at his late conduct; when he put out his hand with the utmoſt warmth to receive her, drew her to him, ſaluted her, (an honour he had never in his life conferred before) and all with ſigns of the ſincereſt friendſhip and affection.—Sandford was preſent, and ever aſſociating the idea of Matilda with Miſs Woodley, felt his heart bound with a triumph it had not enjoyed for many a day.

Matilda liſtened with delight to the recital Miſs Woodley gave on her return, and many times while it laſted exclaimed "She was happy." But poor Matilda's ſudden tranſports of joy, which ſhe termed happineſs, were not made for long continuance; and if ſhe ever found cauſe for gladneſs, ſhe far oftener had motives for grief.

As Mr. Sandford was ſitting with her and Miſs Woodley one evening about a week

week after, a perſon rung at the bell and enquired for him; on being told of it by the ſervant, he went to the door of the apartment and cried "Oh! is it you? Come in."—An elderly man entered, who had been for many years the head gardener at Elmwood Houſe; a man of honeſty and ſobriety, and with a large indigent family of aged parents, children, and other relatives, who ſubſiſted wholly on the income ariſing from his place.—The ladies, as well as Sandford, knew him well, and they all, almoſt at once, aſked "What was the matter?" for his looks told them ſomething diſtreſsful had befallen him.

"Oh Sir!" ſaid he to Sandford, "I come to intreat your intereſt."

"In what, Edwards?" ſaid Sandford with a mild voice; for when his aſſiſtance was ſupplicated in diſtreſs, his rough tones always took a plaintive key.

"My Lord has diſcharged me from his ſervice,"—(returned Edwards trembling, and the tears ſtarting in his eyes;) "I am undone,

undone, Mr. Sandford, unleſs you plead for me."

"I will," ſaid Sandford, "I will."

"And yet I am almoſt afraid of your ſucceſs," replied the man, "for my Lord has ordered me out of his houſe this moment; and though I knelt down to him to be heard, he had no pity."

Matilda ſighed from the bottom of her heart, and yet ſhe envied this poor man who had been kneeling to her father.

"What was your offence?" cried Sandford.

The man heſitated; then looking at Matilda, ſaid, "I'll tell you, Sir, ſome other time."

"Did you name me, before Lord Elmwood?" cried ſhe eagerly, and terrified.

"No, Madam," replied he, "but I unthinkingly ſpoke of my poor Lady that is dead and gone."

Matilda burſt into tears.

"How came you to do ſo mad a thing?" cried Sandford, with the encouragement his

his looks had once given him, now fled from his face.

"It was unthinkingly," repeated Edwards; "I was ſhowing my Lord ſome plans for the new walks, and told him, among other things, that her Ladyſhip had many years ago approved of them."—'Who?' cried he.—Still I did not call to mind, but repeated 'Lady Elmwood, Sir, while you were abroad.'—As ſoon as theſe words were delivered, I ſaw my doom in his looks, and he commanded me to quit his houſe and ſervice that inſtant."

"I am afraid," ſaid Sandford, ſitting down, "I can do nothing for you."

"Yes, Sir, you know you have more power over my Lord than any body—and perhaps you may be able to ſave me and all mine from miſery."

"I would if I could," replied Sandford quickly.

"You can but try, Sir."

Matilda was all this while drowned in tears; nor was Miſs Woodley much leſs affected—Lady Elmwood was before their eyes

—Matilda

—Matilda beheld her in her dying moments; Miſs Woodley ſaw her as the gay ward of Dorriforth.

"Aſk Mr. Ruſhbrook," ſaid Sandford, prevail on him to ſpeak; he has more power than I have."

"He has not enough, then," replied Edwards, "for he was in the room with my Lord when what I have told you happened."

"And did he ſay nothing? aſked Sandford.

"Yes, Sir; he offered to ſpeak in my behalf, but my Lord interrupted him, and ordered him out of the room—he inſtantly went.

Sandford now obſerving the effect which this narration had on the two ladies, led the man to his own apartments, and there aſſured him he durſt not undertake his cauſe; but that if time or chance ſhould happily make an alteration in his Lordſhip's diſpoſition, he would be the firſt to try to replace him.—Edwards was obliged to ſubmit; and before the next day

day at noon, his pleaſant houſe by the ſide of the park, his garden, and his orchard, which he had occupied above twenty years, were cleared of their old inhabitant, and all his wretched family.

CHAPTER XIV.

THIS melancholy incident perhaps affected Matilda and all the friends of the deceaſed Lady Elmwood, beyond any other that had occurred ſince her death. A few days after this circumſtance, Miſs Woodley, in order to divert the diſconſolate mind of Lady Matilda, (and perhaps bring her ſome little anecdotes, to conſole her for that which had given her ſo much pain) waited upon Lord Elmwood in his library, and borrowed ſome books out of it.—He was now perfectly well from his fall, and received her with the ſame politeneſs as uſual, but, of courſe, not with that particular warmth he had received her juſt after his illneſs.—Ruſhbrook was in the library at the ſame time; he ſhewed to her ſeveral beautiful prints, which his Lordſhip had

had juſt received from London, and appeared anxious to entertain, and give tokens of his eſteem and reſpect for her.—But what gave her pleaſure beyond any other attention was, that after ſhe had taken (by the aid of Ruſhbrook) about a dozen volumes from different ſhelves, and had laid them together, ſaying ſhe would ſend her ſervant to fetch them, Lord Elmwood went eagerly to the place where they were, and taking up each book, examined attentively what it was.—One author he complained was too light, another too depreſſing, and put them on the ſhelves again; another was erroneous and he changed it for a better; and thus he warned her againſt ſome, and ſelected other authors; as the moſt cautious preceptor culls for his pupil, or a fond father for his darling child.—She thanked him for his attention to her, but her heart thanked him for his attention to his daughter.—For as ſhe herſelf had never received ſuch a proof of his care ſince all their long acquaintance, ſhe reaſonably ſuppoſed Matilda's reading and not hers, was the object of his ſolicitude.

Having

Having in theſe books ſtore of comfort for poor Matilda, ſhe eagerly returned with them; and in reciting every particular circumſtance, made her conſider the volumes almoſt like preſents from her father.

The month of September was now arrived, and Lord Elmwood, accompanied by Ruſhbrook, went to a ſmall ſhooting ſeat about twenty miles diſtant from Elmwood Caſtle, for a week's particular ſport.---Matilda was once more at large; and one beautiful forenoon, about eleven o'clock, ſeeing Miſs Woodley walking on the lawn before the houſe, ſhe haſtily took her hat to join her; and not waiting to put it on went nimbly down the great ſtaircaſe with it hanging on her arm.---When ſhe had deſcended a few ſtairs, ſhe heard a footſtep walking ſlowly up; and (from what emotion ſhe could not tell,) ſhe ſtopt ſhort, half reſolved to return back.---She heſitated a ſingle inſtant which to do---then went a few ſteps farther till ſhe came to the ſecond landing place; when, by the ſudden winding of the ſtaircaſe,---Lord Elmwood was immediately before her!

She

She had felt ſomething like affright before ſhe ſaw him—but her reaſon told her ſhe had nothing to fear, as he was far away.—But now the appearance of a ſtranger whom ſhe had never before ſeen; an air of authority in his looks as well as in the ſound of his ſteps; a reſemblance to the portrait ſhe had ſeen of him; a ſtart of aſtoniſhment which he gave on beholding her; but above all—her *fears* confirmed her it was him.—She gave a ſcream of terror---put out her trembling hands to catch the baluſtrades on the ſtairs for ſupport---miſſed them---and fell motionleſs into her father's arms.

He caught her, as by that impulſe he would have caught any other perſon falling for want of aid.---Yet when he found her in his arms, he ſtill held her there---gazed on her attentively---and once preſſed her to his boſom.

At length, trying to eſcape the ſnare into which he had been led, he was going to leave her on the ſpot where ſhe fell, when her eyes opened and ſhe utttered, "Save me!"

me!"---Her voice unmanned him.---His long-reſtrained tears now burſt forth---and ſeeing her elapſing into a ſwoon again, he cried out eagerly to recall her.---Her name did not however come to his recollection---nor any name but this---"Miſs Milner---Dear Miſs Milner."

That ſound did not awake her; and now again he wiſhed to leave her in this ſenſeleſs ſtate, that not remembering what had paſſed, ſhe might eſcape the puniſhment.

But at this inſtant Giffard, with another ſervant, paſſed by the foot of the ſtairs; on which, Lord Elmwood called to them—and into Giffard's hands delivered his apparently dead child; without one command reſpecting her, or one word of any kind; while his face was agitated with ſhame, with pity, with anger, with paternal tenderneſs.

As Giffard ſtood trembling, while he relieved his Lord from this hapleſs burthen; his Lordſhip had to unlooſe her hand from the ſide of his coat, which ſhe had caught faſt hold of as ſhe fell, and graſped ſo cloſely,

cloſely, it was with difficulty releaſed.—On taking the hand away his Lordſhip trembled—faltered—then bade Giffard do it.

"Who, I, my Lord, I ſeparate you?" cried he.—But recollecting himſelf, "My Lord, I will obey your commands whatever they are." And ſeizing her hand, pulled it with violence—it fell—and her father went away.

Matilda was carried to her own apartments, laid upon the bed, and Miſs Woodley called to attend her, after liſtening to the recital of what had paſſed.

When Lady Elmwood's old and affectionate friend entered the room, and ſaw her youthful charge lying pale and ſpeechleſs, yet no father by to comfort or ſooth her, ſhe lifted up her hands to heaven, exclaiming, with a flood of tears, "And is this the end of thee, my poor child?—Is this the end of all our hopes?—of thy own fearful hopes—and of thy mother's ſupplications?—Oh! Lord Elmwood! Lord Elmwood!"

At

At that name Matilda ſtarted, and cried, "Where is he?—Is it a dream, or have I ſeen him?"

"It is all a dream, my dear," ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"And yet I thought he held me in his arms," ſhe replied, "I thought I felt his hands preſs mine—Let me ſleep and dream it again."

Now thinking it beſt to undeceive her, "It is no dream, my dear," returned Miſs Woodley.

"Is it not?" cried ſhe, ſtarting up and leaning on her elbow—"Then I ſuppoſe I muſt go away---go for ever away."——

Sandford now entered.---Having been told the news he came to condole---But at the ſight of him Matilda was terrified, and cried, "Do not reproach me, do not upbraid me---I know I have done wrong---I know I had but one command from my father, and that I have diſobeyed."

Sandford could not reproach her, for he could not ſpeak;---he therefore only walked to the window, and concealed his tears.

That

That whole day and night was paſſed in ſympathetic grief, in alarm at every ſound, leſt it ſhould be a meſſenger to pronounce Matilda's deſtiny.

Lord Elmwood did not ſtay upon this viſit above three hours at Elmwood Houſe; he then ſet off again for the ſeat he had left; where Ruſhbrook ſtill remained, and from whence his Lordſhip had merely come by accident, to look over ſome writings he wanted diſpatched to town.

During his ſhort continuance here, Sandford cautiouſly avoided his preſence; for he thought, in a caſe like this, what nature would not of herſelf do, no art, no arguments of his could effect---and to nature and to providence he left the whole.---What theſe two powerful principles brought about, the reader muſt judge, on peruſing the following letter, received early the next morning by Miſs Woodley.

CHAPTER XV.

A letter from Giffard, Lord Elmwood's Houſe Steward, to Miſs Woodley.

" Madam,

" MY Lord, above a twelvemonth " ago, acquainted me he had permitted " his daughter to reſide in his houſe; but " at the ſame time he informed me, the " grant was under a certain reſtriction, " which if ever broken, I was to ſee his " then determination (of which he alſo " acquainted me) put in execution. In " conſequence of Lady Matilda's indiſpo- " ſition, Madam, I have ventured to delay " this notice till morning---I need not ſay " with what concern I now give it, or " mention to you I believe, what is for- " feited. My Lord ſtaid but a few hours " yeſterday after the unhappy circum-

" ſtance

" ſtance on which I write, took place; nor
" did I ſee him after, till he was in his car-
" riage; he then ſent for me to the carri-
" age door, and told me he ſhould be back
" in two days time, and added 'Remem-
" ber your duty.' That duty, I hope, Ma-
" dam, you will not require I ſhould men-
" tion in more direct terms. As ſoon as
" my Lord returns, I have no doubt but
" he will aſk me if it is fulfilled, and I ſhall
" be under the greateſt apprehenſion ſhould
" his commands not be obeyed.

" If there is any thing wanting for the
" convenience of your and Lady Matilda's
" departure, you have but to order it, and
" it is at your ſervice—I mean likewiſe any
" caſh you may have occaſion for. I ſhould
" preſume to add my opinion where you
" might beſt take up your abode; but with
" ſuch advice as you will have from Mr.
" Sandford, mine would be but aſſuming.

" I would alſo have waited upon you,
" Madam, and have delivered myſelf the
" ſubſtance of this letter; but I am an old

" man, and the changes I have been witneſs
" to in my Lord's houſe ſince I firſt lived
" in it, has encreaſed my age many years;
" and I have not the ſtrength to ſee you up-
" on this occaſion.—I loved my deceaſed
" Lady—I love my Lord—and I love their
" child—nay, ſo I am ſure does my Lord
" himſelf; but there is no accounting for
" his reſolutions, or for the alteration his
" diſpoſition has lately undergone.

" I beg pardon, Madam, for this long
" intruſion, and am, and ever will be
" (while you and my Lord's daughter are
" ſo) your afflicted humble ſervant,

" ROBERT GIFFARD.

" *Elmwood Houſe*,
" *Sept.* 12."

When this letter was brought to Miſs Woodley, ſhe knew what it contained before ſhe opened it, and therefore took it with an air of reſignation—yet though ſhe gueſſed the momentous part of its contents, ſhe

ſhe dreaded in what words it might be related; and having now no great good to hope for, hope, that will never totally expire, clung at this criſis to little circumſtances, and ſhe hoped moſt fervently the terms of the letter might not be harſh, but that Lord Elmwood had delivered his commands in gentle language. The event proved he had; and loſt to every important comfort, ſhe felt grateful to him for this ſmall one.

Matilda, too, was cheared by this letter, becauſe ſhe expected ſomething worſe; and the laſt line where Giffard ſaid he knew "his Lordſhip loved her," ſhe thought repaid her for the purport of the other part.

Sandford was not ſo eaſily reſigned or comforted—he walked about the room when the letter was ſhewn to him—called it cruel ſtifled his tears, and wiſhed to ſhow his reſentment only—but the former burſt through all his endeavours, and he ſunk into grief.

Nor was the fortitude of Matilda, which came to her aſſiſtance on the firſt onſet of this trial, ſufficient to arm her, when the moment came ſhe was to quit the houſe—her father's houſe—never to ſee that, or him again.

When word was brought that the carriage was at the door, which was to convey her from all ſhe held ſo dear, and ſhe ſaw before her the proſpect of a long youthful and healthful life, in which miſery and deſpair were all ſhe could diſcern; that deſpair ſeized her at once, and gaining courage from it, ſhe cried,

"What have I to fear if I diſobey my father's commands once more? he cannot uſe me worſe. I'll ſtay here till he returns—again throw myſelf in his way, and then I will not faint, but plead for mercy. Perhaps were I to kneel to him—kneel, like other children, and beg his bleſſing; he would not refuſe it me."

"You muſt not try," ſaid Sandford mildly.

"Who?"

"Who?" cried ſhe, "ſhall prevent my flying to my father? have I another friend on earth to go to? have I one relation in the world but him? This is the ſecond time I have been commanded out of the houſe. In my infant ſtate my cruel father turned me out; but then he ſent me to a mother —now I have none; and I will ſtay with him."

Again the ſteward ſent to let them know the coach was waiting.

Sandford now, with a determined countenance, went coolly up to Lady Matilda, and taking her hand, ſeemed reſolved to lead her to the carriage.

Accuſtomed to be awed by every ſerious look of his, ſhe yet reſiſted this; and cried "Would *you* be the miniſter of my father's cruelty?"

"Then," ſaid Sandford ſolemnly to her, "farewell—from this moment you and I part. I will take my leave, and do you remain where you are—at leaſt till you are forced away. But I'll not ſtay to be turn-

ed out—for it is impoſſible your father will ſuffer any friend of yours to continue here, after this diſobedience. Adieu."

"I'll go this moment," ſaid ſhe, and roſe haſtily.

Miſs Woodley took her at her word, and hurried her immediately out of the room.

Sandford followed ſlow behind, with the ſame ſpirits as if he had followed at her funeral.

When ſhe came to that ſpot on the ſtairs where ſhe had met her father, ſhe ſtarted back; and ſcarcely knew how to paſs it. When ſhe had—"There he held me," ſaid ſhe, "and I thought I felt him preſs me to his heart, but I now find I was miſtaken."

As Sandford came forward to hand her into the coach, "Now you behave well;" ſaid he, "by this behaviour, you do not entirely cloſe all proſpect of reconciliation with your father."

"Do you think it is not yet impoſſible?" cried ſhe, claſping his hand. "Giffard ſays he loves me," continued ſhe, "and do you

you think he might yet be brought to forgive me?"

"Forgive you?" cried Sandford.

"Suppoſe I was to write to him, and entreat his forgiveneſs."

"Do not write yet," ſaid Sandford with no chearing accent.

The carriage drove off—and as it went, Matilda leaned her head from the window, to ſurvey Elmwood Houſe from the roof to the bottom. She caſt her eyes upon the gardens too—upon the fiſhponds—the coach houſes even, and all the offices adjoining—which as objects ſhe ſhould never ſee again—ſhe gazed at, as objects of importance.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUSHBROOK, who, at twenty miles diſtance, could have no conjecture what had paſſed at Elmwood Houſe, (during the ſhort viſit Lord Elmwood made there) went that way with his dogs and gun in order to meet his Lordſhip's chariot on its return and ride with him back---he did ſo —and getting into the carriage, told my Lord eagerly the ſport he had had during the day; laughed at an accident that had befallen one of his dogs, and for ſome time did not perceive but that his Lordſhip was perfectly attentive. At length, obſerving he anſwered more negligently than uſual to what he ſaid, Ruſhbrook turned his eyes quickly upon him and cried,

"My Lord, are you not well?"

"Yes;

"Yes; perfectly well, I thank you, Ruſhbrook," replied his Lordſhip, and leaned back againſt the carriage.

"I thought, Sir," returned Ruſhbrook, "you ſpoke languidly; I beg your pardon."

"I have the head-ach a little," anſwered he; then taking off his hat, bruſhed the powder from it, and as he put it on again, fetched a moſt heavy ſigh; which no ſooner had eſcaped him, than, to drown its ſound, he ſaid briſkly,

"And ſo you tell me you have had good ſport to-day!"

"No, my Lord, I ſaid but indifferent."

"True, ſo you did. Bid the man drive faſter---it will be dark before we get home."

"You will ſhoot to-morrow, my Lord?"

"Certainly."

"How does Mr. Sandford do, Sir."

"I did not ſee him."

"Not

"Not ſee Mr. Sandford, my Lord?—but he was out, I ſuppoſe---for they did not expect you at Elmwood Houſe."

"No, they did not."

In ſuch converſation Ruſhbrook and his uncle continued till the end of their journey. Dinner was then immediately ſerved, and his Lordſhip now appeared much in his uſual ſpirits; at leaſt not ſuſpecting any cauſe for their abatement, Ruſhbrook did not obſerve any alteration.

Lord Elmwood went however earlier to bed than ordinary, or rather to his bed-chamber; for though he retired ſome time before his nephew, when Ruſhbrook paſſed his chamber-door it was open; and he not in bed, but ſitting in a muſing poſture as if he had forgot to ſhut it.

When Ruſhbrook's valet came to attend his maſter, he ſaid to him,

"I ſuppoſe, Sir, you do not know what has happened at Elmwood Houſe."

"For

"For heaven's ſake what?" cried Ruſhbrook.

"My Lord has met Lady Matilda," replied the man.

"How? Where? What's the conſequence?"

"We don't know yet, Sir; but all the ſervants ſuppoſe, her Ladyſhip will not be ſuffered to remain there any longer."

"They all ſuppoſe wrong," returned Ruſhbrook haſtily; "my Lord loves her I am certain, and this event may be the happy means, of his treating her as his child, from this day."

The ſervant ſmiled and ſhook his head.

"Why, what more do you know?"

"Nothing more than I have told you, Sir; except that his Lordſhip took no kind of notice of her Ladyſhip, that appeared like love."

Ruſhbrook was all uneaſineſs and anxiety to know the particulars of what had paſſed; and now Lord Elmwood's inquietude, which he had but ſlightly noticed before,

before, came full to his obſervation. He was going to aſk more queſtions, but he recollected that Lady Matilda's misfortunes were too ſacred, to be talked of thus familiarly by the ſervants of the family; beſides, it was evident this man thought, and but naturally, it might not be for his maſter's intereſt the father and the daughter ſhould be united; and therefore would certainly give to all he ſaid the oppoſite colouring.

In ſpite of his prudence, however, and his delicacy towards Matilda, Ruſhbrook could not let his valet leave him till he had inquired, and learned all the circumſtantial account of what had happened; except, indeed, the order received by Giffard;—which being given after his Lordſhip was in his carriage, and in conciſe terms, the domeſtics who attended him (and from whom this man had gained his intelligence) were of that unacquainted.

When

When the valet had left Ruſhbrook alone, the perturbation of his mind was ſo great, that he was at length undetermined whether to go to bed, or to ruſh into his uncle's apartment, and at his feet beg for that compaſſion upon his daughter, which he feared he had denied her. But then again, to what dangers did he not expoſe himſelf by ſuch a ſtep? Nay, he might perhaps even injure her whom he wiſhed to ſerve; for if his Lordſhip was at preſent unreſolved, whether to forgive or to reſent this diſobedience to his commands, another's interference might enrage and determine him on the latter.

This conſideration was ſo weighty it reſigned Ruſhbrook to the ſuſpence he muſt endure till the morning; when he flattered himſelf, that by watching every look and motion of Lord Elmwood's, his penetration would be able to diſcover the ſtate of his heart, and how he meant to act.

But the morning came, and he found all his prying curioſity was of no avail; his Lordſhip

Lordſhip did not uſe one word, one look, or act on that was not cuſtomary.

On firſt ſeeing him, Ruſhbrook bluſhed at the ſecret with which he was entruſted; then contemplated the joy he ought to have known in claſping in his arms a child like Matilda---whoſe tenderneſs, reverence and duty had deprived her of all ſenſation at his ſight; which was in Ruſhbrook's mind an honour, that rendered him ſuperior to what he was before.

They were in the fields all the day as uſual; Lord Elmwood now chearful, and complaining no more of the head-ach.—Yet once being ſeparated from his nephew, Ruſhbrook croſſed over a ſtile into another field, and found him ſitting by the ſide of a bank, his gun laying by him, and he loſt in thought. He roſe on ſeeing him, and proceeded to the ſport as before.

At dinner, he ſaid he ſhould not go to Elmwood Houſe the next day, as he had appointed, but ſtay where he was, three or four

four days longer.—From theſe two ſmall occurrences, Ruſhbrook would fain have extracted ſomething by which to judge the ſtate of his mind; but upon the teſt, that was impoſſible—he had caught him muſing many a time before; and as to his prolonging his ſtay, that might ariſe from the ſport—or, indeed, had any thing more material ſwayed him, who could penetrate whether it was the effect of the lenity, or the ſeverity, he had dealt towards his child? whether his continuance there was to ſhun her, or to ſhun the houſe from whence he had turned her?

The three or four days for their abode where they were, being paſſed, they both returned together to Elmwood Houſe.—Ruſhbrook thought he ſaw his uncle's countenance change as they entered the avenue, yet he did not appear leſs in ſpirits; and when Sandford joined them at dinner, his Lordſhip went with his uſual chearfulneſs to him, and (as was his cuſtom after any ſeparation) put out his hand chearfully

to

to take his. Sandford ſaid, "How do you do, my Lord?" chearfully in return; but put both his hands into his boſom, and walked to the other ſide of the room. Lord Elmwood did not ſeem to obſerve this affront—nor was it done as an affront—it was merely what poor Sandford felt; and he felt he could *not* ſhake hands with him.

Ruſhbrook ſoon learnt the news that Matilda was gone, and Elmwood Houſe was to him a deſert—he ſaw about it no real friend of hers, except poor Sandford, and to him Ruſhbrook knew himſelf now, more diſpleaſing than ever; and all the overtures he made to him to be friends, he at this time found more and more ineffectual. Matilda was baniſhed; and her ſuppoſed triumphant rival was, to Sandford, more odious than he ever had been.

In alleviation of their baniſhment, Miſs Woodley with her charge had not returned to their old retreat; but were gone to a large

large farm-houſe, no more than about thirty miles from Lord Elmwood's: here Sandford with little inconvenience viſited them; nor did his Lordſhip ever take any notice of his occaſional abſence; for as he had before given his daughter, in ſome meaſure, to his charge; ſo honour, delicacy, and the common ties of duty, made him approve rather than condemn his attention to her.

Though Sandford's frequent viſits ſoothed Matilda, they could not comfort her; for he had no conſolation to beſtow ſuited to her mind—her father had given no one token of regret for what he had done. He had even inquired ſternly of Giffard on his returning home,

"If Miſs Woodley had left the houſe?"

The ſteward gueſſing the whole of his meaning, anſwered, "Yes, my Lord; and *all* your commands in that reſpect have been obeyed."

He replied, "I am ſatisfied," and, to the grief of the old man, appeared really ſo.

To

To the farm houſe, the place of Matilda's reſidence, there came, beſides Sandford, another viſitor far leſs welcome; Viſcount Margrave. He had heard with ſurpriſe, and ſtill greater joy, that Lord Elmwood had once more ſhut his doors againſt his daughter. In this her diſcarded ſtate his Lordſhip no longer burthened his lively imagination with the dull thoughts of marriage, but once more formed the brutal idea of making her his miſtreſs.

Ignorant of a certain decorum which attended all Lord Elmwood's actions, he ſuſpected his child might be in want; and an acquaintance with the worſt part of her ſex informed him, relief from poverty was the ſure bargain for his ſucceſs. With theſe hopes, he again paid Miſs Woodley and her a viſit; but the coldneſs with which he was ſtill received by the firſt, and the haughtineſs with which the laſt, ſtill kept him at a diſtance, again made him fear to give one alluſion of his purpoſe: but he returned home reſolved to write what he durſt

durſt not ſpeak—he did ſo—he offered his ſervices, his purſe, his houſe; they were rejected with contempt, and a ſtill ſtronger prohibition given to his viſits.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVII.

LORD Elmwood had now allowed Ruſhbrook a long vacation, in reſpect to his anſwer upon the ſubject of marriage; and the young man vainly imagined, his Lordſhip's intentions upon that ſubject were entirely given up. One morning however, as he was attending him in the library,

"Henry"——ſaid his Lordſhip, with a pauſe at the beginning of his ſpeech, which indicated he was going to ſay ſomething of importance, "Henry——you have not forgot the diſcourſe I had with you, a little time previous to your illneſs?"

Henry heſitated--for he wiſhed to have forgotten it—but it was too ſtrongly impreſſed upon his mind. His uncle reſumed:

"What, equivocating again, Sir?"—— Do you remember it, or do you not?"——

"Yes, my Lord, I do."

"And

"And are you prepared to give me an anſwer?"

Ruſhbrook pauſed again.

"In our former converſation," his Lordſhip continued, "I gave you but a week to determine--- there is, I think, elapſed ſince that time, half a year."

"About as much, Sir."

"Then ſurely you have now made up your mind?"

"I had done that, at firſt, my Lord---provided it had met with your concurrence."

"You wiſhed to lead a bachelor's life, I think you ſaid."

Ruſhbrook bowed.

"Contrary to my will?"

"No, my Lord, I wiſhed to have your approbation."

"And you wiſhed for my approbation of the very oppoſite thing to that I propoſed? But I am not ſurpriſed---ſuch is the gratitude of the world---and ſuch is yours."

"My Lord, if you doubt my gratitude"——

"Give

"Give me a proof of it, Harry, and I will doubt of it no longer."——

"Upon every other ſubject but this, my Lord, heaven is my witneſs your happineſs"——

His Lordſhip interrupted him. "I underſtand you---upon every other ſubject, but the only one, my content requires, you are ready to obey me. I thank you."

"My Lord do not torture me with this ſuſpicion; it is ſo contrary to my deſerts I cannot bear it.

"Suſpicion of your ingratitude!---you judge too favourably of my opinion;---it amounts to certainty.

"Then to convince you, Sir, I am not ungrateful, tell me who the lady is you have choſen for me, and here I give you my word, I will ſacrifice all my future proſpects of happineſs---all, for which I would wiſh to live---and become her huſband, as ſoon as you ſhall appoint."

This was ſpoken with a tone ſo expreſſive of deſpair, that Lord Elmwood replied,

"And

"And while you obey me, you take care to let me know, it will coſt you your future happineſs. This is, I ſuppoſe, to enhance the merit of the obligation—but I ſhall not accept your acquieſcence on theſe terms."

"Then in diſpenſing with it, I hope Sir, for your pardon!"

"Do you ſuppoſe, Ruſhbrook, I can pardon an offence, the ſole foundation of which, ariſes from a ſpirit of diſobedience? for you have declared to me your affections are diſengaged. In our laſt converſation did you not ſay ſo?"

"At firſt I did, my Lord—but you permitted me to conſult my heart more cloſely; and I have found I was miſtaken."

"You then own you at firſt told me a falſehood, and yet have all this time, kept me in ſuſpence without confeſſing it."

"I waited, Sir, till you ſhould enquire"——

"You have then Sir, waited too long." And the fire flaſhed from his eyes.

Ruſhbrook now found himſelf in that perilous ſtate, that admitted of no medium of reſentment, but by ſuch daſtardly conduct on his part, as would wound both his truth and courage; and thus animated by his danger, he was reſolved to plunge boldly at once into the depth of his patron's anger.

"My Lord," ſaid he, (but he did not undertake this taſk without ſuſtaining the trembling and convulſion of his whole frame) "My Lord—waving for a moment the ſubject of my marriage—permit me to remind you, that when I was upon my ſick bed, you promiſed, that on my recovery, you would liſten to a petition I had to offer you."

"Let me recollect,"—ſaid his Lordſhip. "Yes—I remember ſomething of it. But I ſaid nothing to warrant any improper petition."

"Its impropriety was not named, my Lord."

"No matter—that, you yourſelf muſt judge of, and anſwer for the conſequences."

"I would

"I would anſwer with my life, willingly —but I own I ſhrink from your anger."

"Then do not provoke it."

"I have already gone too far to recede---and you would of courſe demand an explanation, if I attempted to ſtop here."

"I ſhould."

"Then, my Lord, I am bound to ſpeak ---but do not interrupt me---hear me out, before you baniſh me from your ſight for ever."

"I will, Sir," replied his Lordſhip, prepared to hear ſomething that would diſpleaſe him, and yet determined to hear with patience to the concluſion.

"Then, my Lord"---(cried Ruſhbrook in the greateſt agitation both of mind and body) "Your daughter"---

The reſolution his Lordſhip had taken (and on which he had given his word to his nephew not to interrupt him) immediately gave way.---The colour roſe in his face---his eyes darted lightning---and his hand was lifted up with the emotion, that word had created.

"You promiſed to hear me, my Lord?" cried Ruſhbrook, "and I claim your promiſe."

His Lordſhip now ſuddenly overcame his violence of paſſion, and ſtood ſilent and reſigned to hear him; but with a determined look, expreſſive of the vengeance that ſhould enſue.

"Lady Matilda," reſumed Ruſhbrook, "is an object that wreſts from me the enjoyment of every bleſſing your kindneſs beſtows. I cannot but feel myſelf as her adverſary---as one who has ſupplanted her in your affections---who ſupplies her place, while ſhe is exiled, a wanderer, and an orphan."

His Lordſhip took off his eyes from Ruſhbrook, during this laſt ſentence, and caſt them on the floor.

"If I feel gratitude towards you, my Lord," continued he, "gratitude is innate in my heart, and I muſt alſo feel it towards her, who firſt introduced me to your protection."

Again

Again the colour flew to Lord Elmwood's face; and again he could hardly reſtrain himſelf from uttering his indignation.

"It was the mother of Lady Matilda;" continued Ruſhbrook, "who was this friend to me; nor will I ever think of marriage, or any other joyful proſpect, while you abandon the only child of my beloved patroneſs, and load me with the rights, which belong to her."

Here Ruſhbrook ſtopped---and Lord Elmwood was ſilent too, for near half a minute; but ſtill his countenance continued fixed, with his unvaried reſolves.

After this long pauſe, his Lordſhip ſaid compoſedly, but firmly, "Have you finiſhed, Mr. Ruſhbrook?"

"All that I dare to utter, my Lord, and I fear, already too much."

Ruſhbrook now trembled more than ever, and looked pale as death; for the ardour of ſpeaking being over, he waited his ſentence, with leſs conſtancy of mind than he expected he ſhould.

"You diſapprove my conduct, it ſeems?" ſaid Lord Elmwood, "and in that, you are but like the reſt of the world---and yet, among all my acquaintance, you are the only one who has dared to inſult me with your opinion. And this you have not done inadvertently; moreover knowingly, willingly, and deliberately. But as it has been my fate to be uſed ill, and ſevered from all thoſe perſons to whom my ſoul has been moſt attached; with leſs regret I can part from you, than was this my firſt trial."

There was a truth and a pathetic ſound in the utterance of theſe words that ſtruck Ruſhbrook to the heart---and he beheld himſelf as a barbarian, who had treated his benevolent and only friend, with an inſufferable liberty; void of reſpect for thoſe gnawing ſorrows which had imbittered ſo many years of his life, and in open violation of his moſt ſtrict commands. He felt he deſerved all he was going to ſuffer, and he fell upon his knees, not ſo much to deprecate the doom he ſaw impending, as thus humbly to acknowledge it was his due.

Lord

Lord Elmwood, irritated by this poſture, as a ſign of the preſumptuous hopes he might be forgiven, ſuffered now his anger to break through all bounds; and raiſing his voice, he cried in a rage,

"Leave my houſe, Sir, Leave my houſe inſtantly, and ſeek ſome other home."

"Juſt as theſe words were begun, Sandford opened the library door; was witneſs to them, and to the imploring ſituation of Ruſhbrook. He ſtood ſilent with amaze!

Ruſhbrook aroſe, and feeling in his mind a preſage, that he might never from that hour, behold his benefactor more; as he bowed to him in token of obedience to his commands, a ſhower of tears covered his face; but Lord Elmwood, unmoved, fixed his eyes upon him which purſued him with their enraged looks to the end of the room. Here he had to paſs Sandford; who, for the firſt time in his life, took hold of him by the hand, and ſaid to Lord Elmwood, "My Lord, what's the matter?"

"That ungrateful villain," cried his Lordſhip, "has dared to inſult me. Leave my houſe this moment, Sir."

Ruſhbrook made an effort to go, but Sandford ſtill held his hand; and ſaid to Lord Elmwood,

"He is but a boy, my Lord, and do not give him the puniſhment of a man."

Ruſhbrook now ſnatched his hand from Sandford's, and threw it with himſelf upon his neck; where he indeed ſobbed like a boy.

"You are both in league," exclaimed Lord Elmwood.

"Do you ſuſpect me of partiality to Mr. Ruſhbrook?" ſaid Sandford, advancing nearer to his Lordſhip.

Ruſhbrook had now gained the point of remaining in the room; but the hope that privilege inſpired (while he ſtill harboured all the juſt apprehenſions for his fate) gave birth, perhaps, to a more exquiſite ſenſation of pain, than deſpair would have done.

He

He ſtood ſilent—confounded—hoping he was forgiven—fearing he was not.

As Sandford approached ſtill nearer to Lord Elmwood, he continued, "No, my Lord, I know you do not ſuſpect me, of partiality to Mr. Ruſhbrook---has any part of my behaviour ever diſcovered it?"

"You now then," replied his Lordſhip, "only interfere to provoke me."

"If that were the caſe," returned Sandford, "there have been occaſions, when I might have done it more effectually---when my own heart-ſtrings were breaking, becauſe I would not provoke, or add to what you ſuffered."

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Sandford," ſaid his Lordſhip mildly.

"And if, my Lord, I have proved any merit in a late forbearance, reward me for it now; and take this young man from the depth of deſpair in which I ſee he is ſunk, and ſay you pardon him."

Lord Elmwood made no anſwer—and Ruſhbrook drawing ſtrong inferences of

hope from his ſilence, lifted up his eyes from the ground, and ventured to look in his face; he found it compoſed to what it had been, but ſtill ſtrongly marked with agitation. He caſt his eyes away again, in confuſion.

On which his Lordſhip ſaid to him---"I ſhall poſtpone your complying with my orders, till you think fit once more to provoke them---and then, not even Sandford, ſhall dare to plead your excuſe."

Ruſhbrook bowed.

"Go, leave the room, Sir."

He inſtantly obeyed.

While Sandford, turning to Lord Elmwood, ſhook him by the hand, and cried, "My Lord, I thank you---I thank you very kindly, my Lord---I ſhall now begin to think I have ſome weight with you."

"You might indeed think ſo, did you know how much I have pardoned."

"What was his offence, my Lord?"

"Such as I would not have forgiven you, or any other earthly being beſides himſelf, but while you were ſpeaking in his behalf, I recollect

I recollected there was a gratitude ſo extraordinary in the hazards he ran, that almoſt made him pardonable."

"I gueſs the ſubject then," cried Sandford; "and yet I could not have ſuppoſed"——

"It is a ſubject we cannot ſpeak on, Sandford, therefore let us drop it."

At theſe words the diſcourſe concluded.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TO the great relief of Ruſhbrook, Lord Elmwood that day dined from home, and he had not the confuſion to ſee him again till the evening. Previous to this, Sandford and he met at dinner; but as the attendants were preſent, nothing paſſed on either ſide reſpecting the incident in the morning. Ruſhbrook, from the peril which had ſo lately threatened him, was now in his perfect cool, and diſpaſſionate, ſenſes; and notwithſtanding the real tenderneſs which he bore to the daughter of his benefactor, he was not inſenſible to the comfort of finding himſelf, once more in the poſſeſſion of all thoſe enjoyments he had forfeited, and for a moment loſt.

As he reflected on this, to Sandford he felt the firſt tie of acknowledgment—but for

for his compaſſion, he knew he ſhould have been at that very time of their meeting at dinner, away from Elmwood Houſe for ever—and bearing on his mind a ſtill more painful recollection; the burthen of his kind patron's continual diſpleaſure. Filled with theſe thoughts, all the time of dinner he could ſcarce look at his companion without his eyes ſwimming in tears of gratitude, and whenever he attempted to ſpeak to him, gratitude choaked his utterance.

Sandford on his part behaved juſt the ſame as ever; and to ſhow he did not wiſh to remind Ruſhbrook of what he had done, he was juſt as uncivil as ever.

Among other things, he ſaid, "He did not know Lord Elmwood dined from home, for if he had, he ſhould have dined in his own apartment."

Ruſhbrook was ſtill more obliged to him for all this, and the weight of obligations with which he was oppreſſed, made him long for an opportunity to relieve himſelf by expreſſions. As ſoon, therefore, as the ſervants were all withdrawn, he began:

"Mr.

"Mr. Sandford, whatever has been your opinion of *me*, I take pride to myſelf, that in my ſentiments towards *you*, I have always diſtinguiſhed you for that humane and diſintereſted character, you have this day proved."

"Humane, and diſintereſted," replied Sandford, "are two flattering epithets for an old man going out of the world, and who can have no temptation to be otherwiſe."

"Then ſuffer me to call your actions generous and compaſſionate, for they have ſaved me"——

"I know, young man," cried Sandford, interrupting him, "you are glad at what I have done, and that you find a gratification in telling me you are; but it is a gratification I will not indulge you with—therefore ſay another ſentence on the ſubject, and" (he aroſe from his ſeat) "I'll leave the room, and never come into your company again, whatever your uncle may ſay to it."

Ruſhbrook

Ruſhbrook ſaw by the ſolemnity of his countenance he was ſerious, and poſitively aſſured him he would never thank him more; on which Sandford took his ſeat again, but he ſtill frowned, and it was many minutes before he conquered his ill humour. As his countenance became leſs ſour, Ruſhbrook fell from ſome general topics he had eagerly ſtarted in order to appeaſe him, and ſaid,

"How hard is it to reſtrain converſation from the ſubject of our thoughts; and yet amidſt our deareſt friends, and among perſons who have the ſame diſpoſitions and ſentiments as our own, their minds fixed upon the ſelf-ſame objects, is this conſtraint practiſed—and thus ſociety, which was meant for one of our greateſt bleſſings, becomes inſipid, nay oftentimes more wearieſome than ſolitude."

"I think, young man," replied Sandford, "you have made pretty free with your ſpeech to-day, and ought not to complain of the want of toleration on that ſcore."

"I do

"I do complain," replied Ruſhbrook; "for if toleration was more frequent, the favour of obtaining it would be leſs."

"And your pride, I ſuppoſe, is above receiving a favour."

"Never from thoſe I eſteem; and to convince you of it, I wiſh this moment to requeſt a favour of you."

"I dare ſay I ſhall refuſe it. However —what is it?"

"Permit me to ſpeak to you upon the ſubject of Lady Matilda?"

Sandford made no anſwer, conſequently did not forbid him - and he proceeded.

"For her ſake - as I ſuppoſe Lord Elmwood may have told you - I this morning raſhly threw myſelf into the predicament from whence you releaſed me - for her ſake, I have ſuffered much—for her ſake, I have hazarded a great deal, and am ſtill ready to hazard more."

"But for your own ſake, do not," returned Sandford drily.

"You may laugh at theſe ſentiments as romantic, Mr. Sandford, but if they are, to me they are nevertheleſs natural."

"But

"But what ſervice are they to be, either to her, or to yourſelf?"

"They are painful to me, and to her would be but impertinent, were ſhe to know them."

"I ſhan't inform her of them, ſo do not trouble yourſelf to caution me againſt it."

"I was not going—you know I was not—but I was going to ſay, that from no one ſo well as from you, could ſhe be told my ſentiments, without the danger of her reſenting the liberty."

"And what impreſſion do you wiſh to give her, from her becoming acquainted with them?"

"The impreſſion, that ſhe has one ſincere friend—that upon every occurrence in life, there is a heart ſo devoted to all ſhe feels, ſhe can never ſuffer without the ſympathy of another—nor ever can command him, and all his fortunes to unite for her welfare, without his ready and immediate compliance."

"And do you imagine, that any of your profeſſions, or any of her neceſſities, would ever

ever prevail upon her to put you to the trial?"

"Perhaps not."

"What, then, are the motives which induced you to wiſh her to be told of this?"

Ruſhbrook pauſed.

"Do you think," continued Sandford, "the intelligence will give her any ſatisfaction?"

"Perhaps not."

"Will it be of any to yourſelf?"

"The higheſt in the world."

"And ſo all you have been urging upon this occaſion, is, at laſt, only to pleaſe yourſelf."

"You wrong my meaning—it is ſhe—her merit which inſpires my deſire of being known to her—it is her ſufferings, her innocence, her beauty"——

Sandford ſtared—Ruſhbrook proceeded: "It is her"——

"Nay ſtop where you are," cried Sandford; "you are arrived at the zenith of perfection

perfection in a woman, and to add one qualification more, would be an anti-climax."

"Oh!" cried Ruſhbrook with warmth, "I loved her, before ever I beheld her."

"Loved her!" cried Sandford, with aſtoniſhment, "You are talking of what you do not intend."

"I am, indeed," returned he in confuſion, "I fell by accident on the word love."

"And by the ſame accident, ſtumbled on the word beauty; and thus by accident, am I come to the truth of all your profeſſions."

Ruſhbrook knew he loved; and though his affection had ſprung from the moſt laudable motives, yet was he aſhamed of it, as of a vice—he roſe, walked about the room, and did not look Sandford in the face for a quarter of an hour. Sandford ſatisfied he had judged rightly, and yet unwilling to be too hard upon a paſſion, which he readily believed muſt have had many noble virtues for its foundation, now got up and walked away, without ſaying any thing in cenſure, though not a word in its approbation.

It

It was in the month of October, and juſt dark, at the time Ruſhbrook was left alone, yet from the agitation of his mind, ariſing from the ſubject on which he had been talking, he found it impoſſible to remain in the houſe, and therefore walked into the fields; but there was another inſtigation, more powerful than the neceſſity of walking; it was the allurement of paſſing along that path where he had laſt ſeen Lady Matilda, and where, for the only time ſhe had condeſcended to ſpeak to him diveſted of haughtineſs, and with a gentleneſs that dwelt upon his memory beyond all her other endowments.

Here he retraced his own ſteps repeatedly, his whole imagination engroſſed with her idea, till the ſound of her father's chariot returning home from his viſit, rouſed him from the ſoft deluſion of his trance, to dread the confuſion and embarraſſment he ſhould endure, on the next meeting with his Lordſhip. He hoped Sandford might be preſent, and yet he was now, almoſt as much

much aſhamed to behold him as his uncle, whom he had ſo lately offended.

As loath to leave the ſpot where he was, as to enter the houſe, he remained there till he conſidered it would be ill manners in his preſent humiliated ſituation, not to ſhow himſelf at the uſual ſupper hour, which was immediately.

As he laid his hand upon the door of the apartment to open it, he was ſorry to hear by Lord Elmwood's voice, he was in the room before him; for there was ſomething much more conſpicuous and diſtreſſing, in entering where he already was, than had his Lordſhip come in after him. He found himſelf, however reaſſured, by overhearing his uncle laugh and ſpeak in a tone expreſſive of the utmoſt good humour to Sandford, who was with him.

Yet again, he felt all the awkwardneſs of his own ſituation; but making one courageous effort, opened the door and entered. His Lordſhip had been away half the day,

day, had dined abroad, and it was neceſſary to take ſome notice of his return; Ruſhbrook therefore bowed humbly, and what was more to his advantage, he looked humbly. Lord Elmwood made a ſlight return to the ſalutation, but continued the recital he had begun to Sandford; then ſat down to the ſupper table---ſupped---and paſſed the whole evening without ſaying a ſyllable, or even caſting a look in remembrance of what had paſſed in the morning. Or if there was any token, that ſhewed he remembered the circumſtance at all, it was the putting his glaſs to his nephew's when Ruſhbrook called for wine, and drinking at the time he did.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE repulſe Lord Margrave received, did not diminiſh the ardour of his purſuit; for as he was no longer fearful of reſentment from the Earl, whatever treatment his daughter might receive, he was determined the anger of Lady Matilda or of her female friend, ſhould not imped his pretenſions.

Having taken this reſolution, he laid the plan of an open violation of all right, all power, and to bear away that prize by force, which no art was likely to procure. He concerted with two of his favourite companions, but their advice was, "one ſtruggle more of fair means." This was totally againſt his Lordſhip's will, for he had much rather have encountered the piercing cries of a female in the laſt agonies of diſtreſs, than

than the fatigue of her ſentimental harangues, or elegant reproofs, ſuch as he had the ſenſe to underſtand, but not the capacity to anſwer.

Stimulated, however, by his friends to one more trial; in ſpite of the formal diſmiſſion he had twice received, he intruded another viſit on Lady Matilda at the farm. Provoked beyond bearing at ſuch unfeeling aſſurance, Matilda refuſed to come into the room where he was, and Miſs Woodley alone received him, and expreſſed her ſurpriſe at the little attention he had paid to her explicit deſire.

"Madam," replied the nobleman, "to be plain with you, I am in love."

"I do not the leaſt doubt it, my Lord," replied Miſs Woodley, "nor ought you to doubt the truth of what I advance, when I aſſure you, you have not the ſmalleſt reaſon to hope your love will be returned; for Lady Matilda is reſolved *never* to liſten to your paſſion."

"That

"That man," he replied, "is to blame, who can relinquiſh his hopes, upon the mere reſolution of a lady."

"And that Lady would be wrong," replied Miſs Woodley, "who ſhould entruſt her happineſs in the care of a man, who can think thus meanly of her, and of her ſex."

"I think highly of them all," returned his Lordſhip; "and to convince you in how high an eſtimation I hold her Ladyſhip in particular, my whole fortune is at her command."

"Your abſenting yourſelf from this houſe, Lord Margrave, ſhe would conſider as a much greater mark of your reſpect."

A long converſation, equally unintereſting as this, enſued; till the unexpected arrival of Mr. Sandford put an end to it. He ſtarted at the ſight of Lord Margrave; but his Lordſhip was much more affected at the ſight of him.

"My Lord," ſaid Sandford boldly to him, "have you received any encourage-

ment from Lady Matilda, to authoriſe this viſit?"

"None, upon my honour, Mr. Sandford; but I hope you know how to pardon a lover?"

"A rational one I do—but you, my Lord, are not ſuch, while you perſecute the pretended object of your affection."

"Do you call it perſecution that I once offered her a ſhare of my title and fortune—and even now, declare my fortune is at her diſpoſal?"

Sandford was uncertain whether he underſtood his meaning—but his Lordſhip, provoked at his ill reception, felt a triumph in not detaining him long in doubt, and proceeded thus:

"For the diſcarded daughter of Lord Elmwood, cannot expect the ſame propoſals which I made while ſhe was acknowledged, and under the protection of her father."

"What propoſals then, my Lord?" aſked Sandford haſtily.

"Such,"

"Such," replied his Lordſhip, "as the Duke of Avon made to her mother."

"Miſs Woodley quitted the room that inſtant. But Sandford, who never felt reſentment but to thoſe in whom he ſaw ſome virtue, calmly replied,

"My Lord, the Duke of Avon was a gentleman, a man of elegance and breeding; and what have you to offer in recompence for your defects in theſe?"

"My wealth," replied he, "oppoſed to her indigence."

Sandford ſmiled, and anſwered,

"Do you ſuppoſe that wealth can be eſteemed, which has not been able to make you reſpectable? What is it which makes wealth valuable? Is it the pleaſures of the table? the pleaſures of living in a fine houſe? or riding in a fine coach? Theſe are pleaſures a Lord enjoys, but in common with his valet. It is the pleaſure of being conſpicuous, which makes riches deſirable—but if we are conſpicuous only for our vice and folly, had we not better remain in poverty?"

"You are beneath my notice."

"I truſt I ſhall continue ſo—and that your Lordſhip will never again condeſcend to come where I am."

"A man of rank condeſcends to mix with any ſociety, when a pretty woman is his object."

"My Lord, I have a book here in my pocket, which I am eager to read; it is an author who ſpeaks ſenſe and reaſon—will you pardon the impatience I feel for ſuch company; and permit me to call your carriage?"

Saying this he went haſtily and called to his Lordſhip's ſervants; the carriage drove up, the door was opened, and Lord Margrave, aſhamed to be expoſed before his attendants, or convinced of the uſeleſſneſs of remaining any longer where he was, departed.

Sandford was ſoon joined by the ladies; and the converſation falling, of courſe, upon the nobleman who had juſt taken his leave,

leave, Sandford unwarily exclaimed, "I wiſh Ruſhbrook had been here."

"Why?" cried Lady Matilda.

"I do believe," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "that young man has ſome good qualities."

"A great many," returned Sandford, mutteringly.

"Happy young man!" cried Matilda: "he is beloved by all thoſe, whoſe affection it would be my choice to poſſeſs, beyond any other bleſſing this world could beſtow."

"And yet I queſtion, if Ruſhbrook is a happy man," ſaid Sandford.

"He cannot be otherwiſe," returned Matilda, "if he is a man of underſtanding."

"He does not want for that," replied Sandford; "although he has certainly many indiſcretions."

"But which Lord Elmwood, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Matilda, "looks upon with tenderneſs."

"Not upon all his faults," anſwered Sandford; "for I have ſeen him in very dangerous circumſtances with your father."

"Have you indeed?" cried Matilda: "then I pity him."

"And I believe," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "that from his heart, he compaſſionates you. Now, Mr. Sandford," continued ſhe, "though this is the firſt time I ever heard you ſpeak in his favour, (and I once thought as indifferently of Mr. Ruſhbrook as you can do) yet now I will venture to aſk you, whether you do not think he wiſhes Lady Matilda much happier than ſhe is?"

"I have heard him ſay ſo," anſwered Sandford.

"It is a ſubject," returned Lady Matilda, "which I did not imagine you, Mr. Sandford, would have permitted to have been lightly mentioned, in your preſence."

"Lightly!—Do you ſuppoſe, my dear, we turned your ſituation into ridicule?"

"No, Sir,—but there is a ſort of humiliation in the grief to which I am doomed, that

that ought ſurely to be treated with the higheſt degree of delicacy by my friends."

"I don't know on what point you fix real delicacy; but if it conſiſts in ſorrow, the young man gives a proof he poſſeſſes it, for he ſhed tears when I laſt heard him mention your name."

"I have more cauſe to weep at the mention of his."

"Perhaps ſo—But let me tell you, Lady Matilda, your father might have preferred a more unworthy object."

"Still had he been to me," ſhe cried, "an object of envy. And as I frankly confeſs my envy of Mr. Ruſhbrook, I hope you will pardon my malice, which is, you know, but a conſequent crime."

The ſubject now turned again upon Lord Margrave; and all of them being firmly perſuaded, this laſt reception would put an end to every farther intruſion from his Lordſhip, they treated his pretenſions, and he himſelf, with the contempt they inſpired—but not with the caution they deſerved.

CHAPTER XX.

THE next morning early Mr. Sandford returned to Elmwood Houſe, but with his ſpirits depreſſed, and his heart overcharged with ſorrow. He had ſeen Lady Matilda, the object of his viſit, but he had beheld her conſiderably altered in her looks and in her health; ſhe was become very thin, and inſtead of the moſt beautiful bloom that uſed to ſpread her cheeks, her whole complexion was of a deadly pale---her countenance no longer expreſſed hope or fear, but a fixed melancholy---ſhe ſhed no tears, but was all ſadneſs. He had beheld this, and he had heard her inſulted by the licentious propoſals of a nobleman, from whom there was no ſatisfaction to be demanded, becauſe ſhe had no friend to vindicate her honour.

Ruſhbrook,

Ruſhbrook, who ſuſpected where Sandford was gone, and imagined he would return that day, took his forenoon's ride, ſo as to meet him on the road a few miles diſtance from the caſtle; for ſince his perilous ſituation with Lord Elmwood, he was ſo fully convinced of the general philanthropy of Sandford's character, that in ſpite of his churliſh manners, he now addreſſed him, free from that reſerve to which his rough behaviour had formerly given birth. And Sandford on his part, believing he had formed an illiberal opinion of Lord Elmwood's heir (though he took no pains to let him know that opinion was changed) yet reſolved to make him reſtitution upon every occaſion that offered.

Their mutual greetings when they met, were unceremonious but cordial; and Ruſhbrook turned his horſe and rode back with Sandford; yet, intimidated by his reſpect and tenderneſs for Lady Matilda, rather than by fear of the rebuffs of his companion, he had not the courage to name her, till their ride was juſt finiſhed, and they

came within a few yards of the houſe---incited then by the apprehenſion he might not ſoon again enjoy ſo fit an opportunity, he ſaid,

"Pardon me, Mr. Sandford, if I gueſs where you have been, and if my curioſity forces me to enquire for Miſs Woodley's and Lady Matilda's health?"

He named Miſs Woodley firſt, to prolong the time before he mentioned Matilda, for though to name her gave him extreme pleaſure, yet it was a pleaſure intermingled with confuſion and pain.

"They are both very well," replied Sandford, "at leaſt they did not complain they were ſick."

"They are not in ſpirits, I ſuppoſe?" ſaid Ruſhbrook.

"No, indeed," replied Sandford, ſhaking his head.

"No new misfortune has happened, I hope?" cried Ruſhbrook, for it was plain to ſee Sandford's ſpirits were unuſually caſt down.

"Nothing

"Nothing new," returned he, "except the inſolence of a young nobleman."

"What nobleman?" cried Ruſhbrook.

"A lover of Lady Matilda's," replied Sandford.

Ruſhbrook was petrified.—"Who? what lover, Mr. Sandford?—explain?—"

They were now arrived at the houſe: and Sandford, without making any reply to this queſtion, ſaid to the ſervant who took his horſe, "He has come a long way this morning; take care of him."

This interruption was torture to Ruſhbrook, who kept cloſe to his ſide, in order to obtain a farther explanation; but Sandford without attending to him, walked negligently into the hall, and before they advanced many ſteps they were met by Lord Elmwood.

All farther information was for the preſent, now wholly put an end to.

"How do you do, Sandford?" ſaid his Lordſhip with extreme kindneſs; as if he thanked him for the journey which he ſuſpected he had been taking.

"I am

"I am indifferent well, my Lord," replied he, with a face of deep concern, and a tear in his eye, partly in gratitude for his Lordſhip's civility, and partly in reproach for his cruelty.

It was not now till the evening, that Ruſhbrook had an opportunity of renewing the converſation, which had been ſo barbarouſly interrupted.

In the evening, no longer able to ſupport the ſuſpenſe in which he was; without fear or ſhame he followed Sandford to his chamber at the time of his retiring, and entreated of him, with all the anxiety he ſuffered, to reveal to him what he alluded to, when he made mention of a lover, and inſolence to Lady Matilda.

Sandford ſeeing his emotion, was angry he had inadvertently mentioned the ſubject; and putting on an air of ſurly importance, deſired if he had any buſineſs with him, to call in the morning.

Exaſperated at ſo unexpected a reception, and at the pain of his diſappointment,

Ruſhbrook

Ruſhbrook replied, "He treated him cruelly, nor would he ſtir out of his room, till he had received a ſatisfactory anſwer to his queſtion."

"Then bring your bed," replied Sandford, "for you muſt paſs your whole night here."

He found it vain to think of obtaining any intelligence by threats, he therefore ſaid in a timid perſuaſive manner,

"Did you, Mr. Sandford, hear Lady Matilda mention my name?"

"Yes," replied Sandford, a little better reconciled to him.

"Did you tell her what I declared to you?" he aſked with more diffidence ſtill.

"No," replied Sandford.

"It is very well, Sir," returned he vexed to the heart.—Yet again wiſhing to ſooth him,

"You certainly, Mr. Sandford, know what is for the beſt—yet I entreat you will give me ſome farther account of the nobleman you named?"

"I know

"I know what is for the beſt," replied Sandford, "and I won't."

Ruſhbrook bowed, and immediately left the room.—He went apparently ſubmiſſive, but the moment he ſhowed this ſubmiſſion, he took the reſolution of paying a viſit himſelf to the farm where Lady Matilda reſided; and of learning either from Miſs Woodley, the people of the houſe, the neighbours, or perhaps from Lady Matilda's own lips, the ſecret which the obſtinacy of Sandford had denied him.

He ſaw all the dangers of this undertaking, but none appeared ſo great as the danger of loſing her he loved, by the influence of a rival—and though Sandford had named "inſolence," he was in doubt whether what had appeared ſuch to him, was ſuch in reality, or would be conſidered as ſuch by her.

To prevent his abſence being ſuſpected by Lord Elmwood, he immediately called his groom, ordered his horſe, and giving thoſe ſervants concerned, a ſtrict charge of ſecrecy

ſecrecy, and ſome frivolous pretence to apologize for his not being preſent at breakfaſt (reſolving to be back by dinner) he ſet off that night, and arrived at an inn about a mile from the farm at the break of day.

The joy he felt when he found himſelf ſo near to the beloved object of his journey, made him thank Sandford in his heart, for the unkindneſs which had ſent him thither. —But new difficulties aroſe, how to accompliſh the end for which he came;—he learnt from the people of the inn that a Lord with a fine equipage had viſited at the farm, but who he was, or for what purpoſe he went, no one could inform him.

Miſerable to return with the ſame doubts unſatisfied with which he ſet out, and yet afraid to proceed to extremities that might be conſtrued into preſumption, he walked diſconſolately (almoſt diſtractedly) about the fields, looking repeatedly at his watch, and wiſhing the time to ſtand ſtill, till he was ready to go back with his errand compleated.

Every

Every field he paſſed, brought him nearer to the houſe on which his imagination was fixed; but how, without forfeiting every appearance of that very reſpect he ſo powerfully felt, could he attempt to enter it?—he ſaw the indecorum, reſolved not to be guilty of it, and yet walked on till he was within but a ſhort orchard of the door. Could he then retreat?—he wiſhed he could; but he now found he had proceeded too far, to be any longer maſter of himſelf.—The time was urgent; he muſt either be bold, and venture her diſpleaſure; or by diffidence during one moment, give up all his hopes perhaps for ever.

With that ſame diſregard to conſequences, which actuated him when he dared to ſupplicate Lord Elmwood in his daughter's behalf, he at length went eagerly to the door and rapped.

A ſervant came—he aſked to "ſpeak with Miſs Woodley, if ſhe was quite alone." He was ſhewn into an apartment, and Miſs Woodley entered to him.

She

She ſtarted when ſhe beheld who it was; but as he did not ſee a frown upon her face, he caught hold of her hand, and ſaid perſuaſively,

"Do not be offended with me.—If I mean to offend you, may I forfeit my life in attonement."

Poor Miſs Woodley, glad in her ſolitude to ſee any one from Elmwood Houſe, forgot his viſit was an offence till he put her in mind of it; ſhe then ſaid with ſome reſerve,

"Tell me the purport of your coming, Sir, and perhaps I may then have no cauſe to complain?"

"It was to ſee Lady Matilda," he replied, "or to hear of her health. It was to offer her my ſervices—it was, Miſs Woodley, to convince her, if poſſible, of my eſteem."

"Had you no other method, Sir?" ſaid Miſs Woodley with the ſame reſerve.

"None;" replied he, "or with joy I ſhould have embraced it; and if you can inform me of any other, tell me I beſeech you

you inſtantly, and I will immediately begone, and purſue your directions."

Miſs Woodley heſitated.

"You know of no other means, Miſs Woodley," he cried.

"And yet I cannot commend this," ſaid ſhe.

"Nor do I. Do not imagine becauſe you ſee me here, I approve my conduct; but reduced to this neceſſity, pity the motives that have urged it."

Miſs Woodley did pity them; but as ſhe would not own ſhe did, ſhe could think of nothing elſe to ſay.

At this inſtant a bell rung from the chamber above.

"That is Lady Matilda's bell," ſaid Miſs Woodley; "ſhe is coming to take a ſhort walk.—Do you wiſh to ſee her?"

Though it was the firſt wiſh Ruſhbrook had, he pauſed, and ſaid, "Will you plead my excuſe?"

As the flight of ſtairs was but ſhort, which Lady Matilda had to come down, ſhe

ſhe was in the room with Miſs Woodley and Mr. Ruſhbrook juſt as that ſentence ended.

She had ſtept beyond the door of the apartment, when perceiving a viſitor, ſhe haſtily withdrew.

Ruſhbrook, animated, though trembling at her preſence, cried "Lady Matilda, do not avoid me, till you know I deſerve ſuch a puniſhment."

She immediately ſaw who it was, and returned back with a proper pride, and yet a proper politeneſs in her manner.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "I did not know you, and I was afraid I intruded upon Miſs Woodley and a ſtranger."

"You do not then conſider me as a ſtranger, Lady Matilda? and that you do not, requires my warmeſt acknowledgements."

She ſat down, as if overcome by ill ſpirits and ill health.

Miſs Woodley now aſked Ruſhbrook to ſit—for till now ſhe had not.

"No

"No, Madam," replied he, with confuſion, "not unleſs her Ladyſhip gives me permiſſion."

Lady Matilda ſmiled, and pointed to a chair—and all the kindneſs which Ruſhbrook during his whole life had received from Lord Elmwood, never inſpired half the gratitude, which this ſingle inſtance of civility from his daughter excited.

He ſat down with the confeſſion of the obligation, upon every feature of his face.

"I am not well, Mr. Ruſhbrook," ſaid Matilda, languidly; "and you muſt excuſe any want of etiquette, you meet with at this houſe."

"While you excuſe me, Madam, what can I have to complain of?"

She appeared abſent while he was ſpeaking, and turning to Miſs Woodley, ſaid, "Do you think I had better walk to-day?"

"No, my dear," anſwered Miſs Woodley; "the ground is damp, and the air cold."

"You are not well, indeed, Lady Matilda," ſaid Ruſhbrook, gazing upon her with the moſt tender reſpect.

She

She ſhook her head; and the tears, without any effort either to impel or reſtrain them, ran faſt down her face.

Ruſhbrook roſe from his ſeat, and with an accent and manner the moſt expreſſive, ſaid, "We are couſins, Lady Matilda---in our infancy we were brought up together---we were beloved by the ſame mother—foſtered by the ſame father"——

"Oh!" cried ſhe, interrupting him, and the tears now guſhed in torrents.

"Nay, do not let me add to your uneaſineſs," reſumed he, "while I am attempting to alleviate it. Inſtruct me what I am to do to ſhow my eſteem and reſpect, rather than permit me thus unguided, to ruſh upon what you may miſterm, cruelty or arrogance."

Miſs Woodley went to Matilda, took her hand, then wiped the tears from her eyes, while Matilda reclined againſt her, wholly regardleſs of Ruſhbrook's preſence.

"If I have been the leaſt inſtrumental to this ſorrow,"——ſaid Ruſhbrook, with a face as much agitated as his mind.

"No,"

"No," ſaid Miſs Woodley in a low voice, "you have not—ſhe is often thus."

"Yes," ſaid Matilda, raiſing her head, "I am frequently ſo weak I cannot reſiſt the ſmalleſt incitement to grief. But do not make your viſit long, Mr. Ruſhbrook," ſhe continued, "for I was juſt then thinking, that ſhould Lord Elmwood hear of this attention you have paid me, it might be fatal to you." Here ſhe wept again, as bitterly as before.

"There is no probability of his hearing of it, Madam," Ruſhbrook replied; "or if there was, I am perſuaded he would not reſent it; for yeſterday, when I am confident he knew Mr. Sandford had been to ſee you, he received him on his return with unuſual marks of kindneſs."

"Did he?" ſaid ſhe—and again ſhe lifted up her head; and her eyes for a moment beamed with hope and joy.

"There is ſomething which we cannot yet define," ſaid Ruſhbrook, "that Lord Elmwood ſtruggles with; but when time ſhall have eradicated"——

Before

Before he could proceed farther, Matilda was once more ſunk into deſpondency, and ſcarce attended to what he was ſaying.

Miſs Woodley obſerving this, ſaid, "Mr. Ruſhbrook, let it be a token we ſhall be glad to ſee you hereafter, that I now uſe the freedom to beg you will put an end to your viſit."

"You ſend me away, Madam," returned he, "with the warmeſt thanks for the reception you have given me; and this laſt aſſurance of your kindneſs is beyond any other favour you could have beſtowed. Lady Matilda," added he, "ſuffer me to take your hand at parting, and let it be a teſtimony that you acknowledge me for a relation."

She put out her hand—which he knelt to receive, but did not raiſe it to his lips—he held the boon too ſacred—and only looking earneſtly upon it, as it lay pale and wan in his, he breathed a ſigh over it, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXI.

SORROWFUL and affecting as this interview had been, Ruſhbrook as he rode home reflected on it with the moſt inordinate delight; and had he not beheld decline of health, in all the looks and behaviour of Lady Matilda, his felicity had been unbounded.—Entranced in the happineſs of her ſociety, the thought of his rival never came once to his mind while he was with her; a want of recollection, however, he by no means regretted, as her whole appearance contradicted every ſuſpicion he could poſſibly entertain, of her favouring the addreſſes of any man living —and had he remembered, he had not dared to have named the ſubject.

The time run ſo ſwiftly while he was away, that it was beyond the dinner hour at

at Elmwood Houſe, when he returned.—— Heated, his dreſs, and his hair diſordered, he entered the dining room juſt as the deſert was put upon the table.—He was confounded at his own appearance, and at the falſehoods he ſhould be obliged to fabricate in his excuſe; there was yet that which engaged his attention, beyond any circumſtance relating to himſelf—the features of Lord Elmwood—of which his daughter's whom he had juſt beheld, had the moſt ſtriking reſemblance; while her's were ſoftened by ſorrow, as his Lordſhip's were rendered auſtere by the ſelf-ſame cauſe.

"Where have you been?" ſaid his Lordſhip with a frown.

"A chaſe, my Lord—I beg your pardon—but a pack of dogs I unexpectedly met."——For in the hacknied art of lying without injury to any one, Ruſhbrook, to his ſhame, was proficient.

His excuſes were received, and the ſubject ceaſed.

During his abſence that day, Lord Elmwood had called Sandford apart and ſaid

to him, that as the malevolence which he once obſerved between him and Ruſhbrook had, he perceived, ſubſided; he adviſed him, if he was a well-wiſher to the young man, to ſound his heart, and counſel him not to act contrary to the will of his neareſt relation and friend. "I myſelf am too haſty," continued Lord Elmwood, "and, unhappily, too much determined upon what I have once (though, perhaps, raſhly) ſaid, to ſpeak upon a topic where it is probable I ſhall meet with oppoſition. You, Sandford, can reaſon with moderation. For after all I have done for my nephew, it would be a pity to forſake him at laſt; and yet, that is but too likely, if he provokes me."

"Sir," replied Sandford, "I will ſpeak to him."

"Yet," cried his Lordſhip ſternly, "do not urge what you ſay for my ſake, but for his—I can part from him with eaſe—but he may then repent, and, you know, repentance always comes too late with me."

"My

"My Lord, I will uſe my endeavours for his welfare. But what is the ſubject on which he has refuſed to comply with your deſires?"

"Matrimony, have not I told you?"

"Not a word."

"I wiſh him to marry, that I may then conclude the deeds in reſpect to my eſtate —And the only child of Sir William Winterton (a rich heireſs) was the wife I meant to propoſe; but from his indifference to all I have ſaid on the ſubject, I have not yet mentioned her name to him; you may."

"I will, my Lord, and uſe all my perſuaſion towards his obedience; and you ſhall have, at leaſt, a faithful account of what he ſays."

Sandford the next morning ſought an opportunity of being alone with Ruſhbrook —he then plainly repeated to him what Lord Elmwood had ſaid, and ſaw him liſten to it all, and anſwer with the moſt tranquil reſolution, "He would do any thing to preſerve the friendſhip and patronage of his uncle, but marry."

"What can be your reaſon?" aſked Sandford, though he gueſſed.

"A reaſon I cannot give to Lord Elmwood."

"Then do not give it to me, for I have promiſed to tell him every thing you ſay to me."

"And every thing I *have* ſaid?" aſked Ruſhbrook haſtily.

"As to what you have ſaid, I don't know whether it has made that impreſſion on my memory to repeat."

"I am glad it has not."

"And my anſwer to your uncle, is to be ſimply, that you will not obey him?"

"I ſhould hope, Mr. Sandford, you would put it in better terms."

"Tell me the terms, and I will be exact."

Ruſhbrook ſtruck his forehead, and walked diſtractedly about the room.

"Am I to give him any reaſon for your diſobeying him?"

"I tell

"I tell you again I dare not name the cauſe."

"Then why do you ſubmit to a power you are aſhamed to own?"

"I am not aſhamed—I glory in it—Are you aſhamed of your eſteem for Lady Matilda?"

"Oh! if ſhe is the cauſe of your diſobedience, be aſſured I ſhall not mention it, for I am forbid to name her."

"And as that is the caſe, I need not fear to ſpeak plainly to you. I love Lady Matilda — or, unacquainted with love, perhaps it is only pity — and if ſo, pity is the moſt pleaſing paſſion that ever poſſeſſed a human heart, and I would not change it for all her father's eſtates."

"Pity then, gives riſe to very different ſenſations — for I pity you, and that ſenſation I would gladly exchange for approbation."

"If you really feel compaſſion for me, and I believe you do, contrive ſome means by your anſwers to Lord Elmwood to pacify him, without involving me. Hint at

my affections being engaged, but not to whom; and add, that I have given my word, if he will allow me a ſhort time, a year or two only, I will, during that period, try to regain them, and uſe all my power to render myſelf worthy the lady for whom he deſigns me."

"And this is not only your ſolemn promiſe, but your fixed determination?"

"Nay, why will you ſearch my heart to the bottom, when its ſurface ought to content you?"

"If you cannot reſolve on what you have propoſed, why do you aſk this time of your uncle? for ſhould he allow it you, at its expiration, your diſobedience to his commands will be leſs pardonable than it is now."

"Within a year, Mr. Sandford, who can tell what ſtrange unthought-of events may not occur to change all our proſpects? even my paſſion may decline."

"In that expectation, then, the failure of which you yourſelf muſt anſwer for, I will

will repeat to his Lordſhip, as much of this diſcourſe as ſhall be proper."

Here Ruſhbrook communicated his having been to ſee Lady Matilda, for which Sandford reproved him, but in leſs ſevere terms than his reproofs were in general delivered; and Ruſhbrook by his entreaties, now gained the intelligence who the nobleman was who had addreſt Matilda, and on what views; but was reſtrained to patience by Sandford's arguments and threats.

Upon the ſubject of this marriage Sandford met his patron, without having determined exactly what to ſay, but reſted on the temper in which he ſhould find his Lordſhip.

At the commencement of the converſation he ſaid, "Ruſhbrook begged for time."

"I have given him time, have I not?" cried Lord Elmwood, "What can be the reaſon of his thus trifling with me?"

Sandford replied, "My Lord, young men are frequently romantic in their notions of love, and think it impoſſible to have a ſincere affection where their own inclinations do not firſt point out the choice."

"If he is in love," anſwered his Lordſhip, "let him take the object, and leave my houſe and me for ever. Nor under this deſtiny need he be pitied; for genuine love will make him happy in baniſhment, in poverty, or in ſickneſs; it makes the poor man happy as the rich, the fool bleſt as the wiſe."——The ſincerity with which Lord Elmwood had loved, was expreſſed more than in words, as he ſaid this.

"Your Lordſhip is talking," replied Sandford, "of the paſſion in its moſt refined and predominant ſenſe; while I may poſſibly be ſpeaking of a mere phantom, that has led this young man aſtray."

"Whatever it be," returned Lord Elmwood, "let him and his friends weigh the caſe well, and act for the beſt—ſo ſhall I."

"His

"His friends, my Lord? What friends, or what friend has he on earth but you?"

"Then why will he not ſubmit to my advice; or himſelf give me ſome ſubſtantial reaſon why he cannot?"

"Becauſe there may be friendſhip without familiarity — and ſo it is between him and you."

"That cannot be; for I have condeſcended to talk to him in the moſt familiar terms."

"To condeſcend, my Lord, is *not* to be familiar.

"Then come, Sir, let us be on an equal footing through you. And now ſpeak out *his* thoughts freely, and hear mine in return."

"Why then he begs for a reſpite for a year or two."

"On what pretence?"

"To me it was a preference to a ſingle life—but I ſuſpect it is — what he imagines to be love — for ſome object whom he thinks your Lordſhip would diſapprove for his wife."

"He has not, then, actually confeſſed this to you?"

"If he has, it was drawn from him by ſuch means, I am not warranted to ſay ſo in direct words."

"I have entered into no contract, no agreement on his account with the friends of the Lady I have pointed out," ſaid Lord Elmwood; "nothing beyond implications have paſſed betwixt her family and myſelf at preſent; and if the perſon on whom he has fixed his affections ſhould not be in a ſituation abſolutely contrary to my wiſhes, I may, perhaps, confirm his choice."

That moment Sandford's courage prompted him to name Lady Matilda, but his diſcretion oppoſed---however, in the various changes of his countenance from the conflict, it was plain to diſcern he wiſhed to ſay more than he dared.

On which Lord Elmwood cried, "Speak on Sandford, what are you afraid of?"

"Of you, my Lord."

His

His Lordſhip ſtarted.

Sandford went on —" I know no tie — no bond—no innocence, a protection from your reſentment."

" You are right," he replied, ſignificantly.

" Then how, my Lord, can you encourage me to ſpeak on, when that which I perhaps would ſay, may offend you to hear?"

" To what, and whither are you *changing* our ſubject?" ſaid his Lordſhip. " But, Sir, if you know my reſentful and relentleſs temper, you ſurely know how to ſhun it."

" Not, and ſpeak plainly."

" Then diſſemble."

" No, I'll not do that — but I'll be ſilent."

" A new parade of ſubmiſſion. You are more tormenting to me than any one I have about me — Conſtantly on the verge of diſobeying my commands, that you may recede, and gain my good will by your forbearance.

forbearance. But know, Mr. Sandford, I will not ſuffer this much longer. If you chooſe upon every occaſion we converſe together, (though the moſt remote from the ſubject) to think upon my daughter, you muſt either baniſh your thoughts, or conceal them, nor by one ſign, one item, remind me of her."

"Your daughter did you call her? Can you call yourſelf her father?"

"I do, Sir—but I am likewiſe the huſband of her mother. And, as ſuch, I ſolemnly ſwear,"——He was proceeding with violence.

"Oh! my Lord," cried Sandford, interrupting him, with his hands claſped in the moſt fervent ſupplication—"Oh! do not let me draw upon her one oath more of your eternal diſpleaſure. I'll kneel to beg you to drop the ſubject."

The inclination he made with his knees bent to the ground, ſtopped Lord Elmwood inſtantly. But though it broke in upon his words, it did not alter one angry look

look — his eyes darted, and his lips trembled with indignation.

Sandford in order to appeaſe him, bowed and offered to withdraw; hoping to be recalled. He wiſhed in vain. Lord Elmwood's eyes followed him to the door, expreſſive of the pleaſure of his abſence.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE companions and counſellors of Lord Margrave, who had ſo prudently adviſed gentle methods in the purſuit of his paſſion, while there was left any hope of their ſucceſs; now, convinced there was none, as ſtrenuouſly commended open violence;—and ſheltered under the conſideration, that their depredations were to be practiſed upon a defenceleſs woman, who had not one protector, except an old prieſt, the ſubject of their ridicule;---aſſured likewiſe from the influence of Lord Margrave's wealth, all inferior conſequences could be overborne, they ſaw no room for fears on any ſide, and what they wiſhed to execute, with care and ſkill premeditated.

When their ſcheme was mature for performance, three of his Lordſhip's choſen companions,

companions, with three ſervants, trained and tried in all the villainous exploits of their maſters, ſet off for the habitation of poor Matilda, and arrived there about the twilight of the evening.

Near four hours after that time (juſt as the family were going to bed) they came up to the doors of the houſe, and rapping violently, gave the alarm of fire, "conjuring all the inhabitants to make their way out immediately, as they would ſave their lives."

The family conſiſted of but few perſons, all of whom ran inſtantly to the doors and opened them; on which two men ruſhed in, and with the plea of ſaving Lady Matilda from the pretended flames, caught her in their arms, and carried her off; while all the deceived people of the houſe, running eagerly to ſave themſelves, paid no regard to her being taken away, till looking for the cauſe for which they had been terrified, they perceived the ſtratagem, and the fatal conſequences.

Amidſt

Amidſt the complaints, ſorrow, and affright of the people of the farm, Miſs Woodley's ſenſations wanted a name—terror and anguiſh give but a faint deſcription of what ſhe ſuffered—ſomething like the approach of death ſtole over her ſenſes, and ſhe ſat like one petrified with horror.—She had no doubt who was the perpetrator of this wickedneſs; but how was ſhe to follow? how effect a reſcue?

The circumſtances of this event, as ſoon as the people had time to call up their recollection, were ſent to a neighbouring magiſtrate; but little could be hoped from that.—Who was to ſwear to the robber? Who undertake to find him out?—Miſs Woodley thought of Ruſhbrook, of Sandford, of Lord Elmwood, but what could ſhe hope from the want of power in the two former?—what from the latter, for the want of will?—Now ſtupified, and now diſtracted, ſhe walked about the houſe inceſſantly, begging for inſtructions what ſhe ſhould do, or how to forget her miſery.

A tenant

A tenant of Lord Elmwood's, who occupied a ſmall farm near to that where Lady Matilda lived, and who was well acquainted with the whole hiſtory of her's and her mother's misfortunes, was returning from a neighbouring fair juſt as this inhuman plan was put in execution.—He heard the cries of a woman in diſtreſs, and followed the ſound till he arrived at a chaiſe in waiting, and ſaw Matilda placed in it by the ſide of two men, who preſented piſtols to him as he offered to approach and expoſtulate.

The farmer, uncertain who this female was, yet went to the houſe ſhe had been taken from (as the neareſt) with the tale of what he had ſeen; and there, being informed Lady Matilda was her whom he had beheld, this intelligence, joined to the powerful effect her ſcreams had on him, made him reſolve to take horſe immediately, and with ſome friends, follow the carriage till they ſhould trace the place to which ſhe was conveyed.

The

The anxiety, the firmneſs diſcovered in determining on this undertaking, ſomething alleviated the agony Miſs Woodley endured, and ſhe began to hope timely aſſiſtance might yet be given to her beloved charge.

The man ſet out, meaning at all events to attempt her releaſe; but before he had proceeded far, the few friends that accompanied him began to reflect on the improbability of their ſucceſs againſt a nobleman, ſurrounded by ſervants, with other attendants likewiſe, and perhaps even countenanced by the lady's father, whom they preſumed to take from him;—or if not, while Lord Elmwood beheld the offence with indifference, that was giving it a ſanction, they might in vain oppoſe.—Theſe cool reflections, tending to their ſafety, had their weight with the companions of the farmer; they all rode back rejoicing at their ſecond thoughts, and left him to purſue his journey and prove his valour by himſelf.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IT was not with Sandford, as it had lately been with Ruſhbrook under the diſpleaſure of Lord Elmwood—to the latter his Lordſhip behaved, as ſoon as their diſſention was over, as if it had never happened—but to Sandford it was otherwiſe; and that reſentment which he had repreſſed at the time of the offence, lurked in his heart and dwelt upon his mind for ſeveral days; during which, he carefully avoided exchanging a word with him, and gave every other demonſtration of his anger.

Sandford, who was experienced in the cruelty and ingratitude of the world, yet could not without difficulty brook this ſeverity, this contumely, from a man, for whoſe welfare, ever ſince his infancy, he had

had laboured; and whoſe happineſs was ſtill more dear to him, in ſpite of all his faults, than any other perſon's.—Even Lady Matilda was not ſo dear to Sandford as her father—and he loved her more that ſhe was Lord Elmwood's child, than for any other cauſe.

Sometimes the old man, incenſed beyond bearing, was on the point of ſaying to his patron, "How in my age, dare you thus treat the man, whom in his youth you reſpected and revered?"

Sometimes inſtead of anger, he felt the tear, he was aſhamed to own, ſteal to his eye and even fall down his cheek.—Sometimes he left the room half determined to leave the houſe—but theſe were all but half determinations; for he knew him with whom he had to deal too well, not to know he might be provoked to greater anger yet; and that ſhould he once raſhly quit his houſe, the doors moſt probably would be ſhut to him for ever.

In this humiliating and degraded ſtate (for even many of the domeſtics could not but obſerve their Lord's diſpleaſure) Sandford paſſed three days, and was beginning the fourth, when ſitting with his Lordſhip and Ruſhbrook juſt after breakfaſt, a ſervant entered, ſaying as he opened the door to ſomebody who followed, "You muſt wait till you have my Lord's permiſſion."

This attracted their eyes to the door, and a man meanly dreſſed, walked in, following cloſe to the ſervant.

The latter turned, and ſeemed again to deſire the perſon to retire, but all in vain; he ruſhed forward regardleſs of his oppoſer, and in great agitation, cried,

"My Lord, if you pleaſe, I have buſineſs with you, provided you will chooſe to be alone."

Lord Elmwood, ſtruck with the ſtranger's earneſtneſs, bade the ſervant leave the room; and then ſaid to him,

"You may ſpeak before theſe gentlemen."

The

The man inſtantly turned pale, and trembled—then, to prolong the time before he ſpoke, went to the door to ſee if it was ſhut---returned---yet ſtill trembling, ſeemed unwilling to ſay his errand.

"What have you done," cried Lord Elmwood, "that you are in this terror?" What have you done, man?"

"Nothing, my Lord," replied he, "but I am afraid I am going to offend you."

"Well, no matter; (anſwered his Lordſhip careleſsly) "only go on, and let me know your buſineſs."

The man's diſtreſs increaſed---the water came to his eyes---and he cried in a voice of grief and of affright—"Your child, my Lord!"——

Ruſhbrook and Sandford ſtarted; and looking at Lord Elmwood, ſaw him turn white as death.—In a tremuluous voice he inſtantly cried,

"What of her?" and roſe from his ſeat.

Encouraged by the queſtion, the poor man gave way to his feelings, and anſwered with every ſign of ſorrow,

"I ſaw

"I ſaw her, my Lord, taken away by force—two ruffians ſeized and carried her away, while ſhe ſcreamed in vain to me for help, and tore her hair in diſtraction."

"Man, what do you mean?" cried his Lordſhip.

"Lord Margrave," returned the ſtranger, "we have no doubt has formed the plot—he has for ſome time paſt beſet the houſe where ſhe lived; and when his viſits were refuſed, he threatened this.—Beſides, one of his ſervants attended the carriage; I ſaw, and knew him."

Lord Elmwood liſtened to the laſt part of this account with ſeeming compoſure—then turning haſtily to Ruſhbrook, he ſaid,

"Where are my piſtols, Harry?"

Sandford roſe from his ſeat, and forgetting all the anger between them, caught hold of his Lordſhip's hand, and cried, "Will you then prove yourſelf a father?"

Lord Elmwood only anſwered, "Yes," and left the room.

Ruſhbrook

Ruſhbrook followed, and begged with all the earneſtneſs he felt, to be permitted to accompany his uncle.

While Sandford ſhaked hands with the farmer a thouſand times.

And he, in his turn, rejoiced as if he had already ſeen Lady Matilda reſtored to liberty.

Ruſhbrook in vain entreated Lord Elmwood; he laid his commands upon him not to ſtir from the caſtle; while the agitation of his own mind was too great to obſerve the rigour of this ſentence upon his nephew.

During the haſty preparations for his Lordſhip's departure, Sandford received from Miſs Woodley the ſad intelligence of what had happened;—but he returned an anſwer to recompenſe her for all ſhe had undergone.

Within a few hours Lord Elmwood ſet off, accompanied by his guide the farmer, and other attendants furniſhed with every requiſite

requiſite to aſcertain the ſucceſs of their enterprize——while poor Matilda little thought of a deliverer nigh, much leſs, that her deliverer ſhould prove her father.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LORD Margrave, black as this incident in his ſtory muſt make him to the reader, ſtill nurſed in his conſcience a reſerve of virtue, to keep him in peace with himſelf. It was his deſign to plead, to argue, to implore, nay even to threaten, long before he put his threats in force; and with this and the following reflection he reconciled, as moſt bad men can, what he had done, not only to the laws of humanity, but to the laws of honour.

"I have ſtolen a woman certainly;" ſaid he to himſelf, "but I will make her happier than ſhe was in that humble ſtate from whence I have taken her. I will even," ſaid he, "now ſhe is in my power, win her affections—and when, in fondneſs, ſhe ſhall

ſhall hereafter hang upon me, how will ſhe thank me for this little trial, through which ſhe will have paſſed to happineſs?"

Thus did his Lordſhip huſh his remorſe, while he waited impatiently at home, in expectation of his prize.

Half expiring with her ſufferings, in body as well as in mind, about twelve o'clock the next night Matilda arrived; and felt her ſpirits revive by the ſtill greater ſufferings that awaited, for her increaſing terrors now rouzed her from that death-like weakneſs, brought on by fatigue.

Lord Margrave's houſe, to which he had gone previous to this occaſion, was ſituated in the lonely part of a well-known foreſt, not more than twenty miles diſtant from London: this was an eſtate he rarely viſited; and as he had but few of his ſervants here, it was a place which he ſuppoſed would be leſs the object of ſuſpicion in the preſent caſe, than any other of his

ſeats. To this, then, Lady Matilda was conveyed, a moſt ſuperb apartment allotted her, and one of his Lordſhip's confidential females placed to attend upon her, with all reſpect and aſſurances of ſafety.

Matilda looked in this woman's face, and ſeeing ſhe bore the features of her ſex, while her knowledge reached none of thoſe worthleſs characters of which this perſon was a ſpecimen, ſhe imagined none of thoſe could look as ſhe did, and therefore found conſolation in her ſeeming tenderneſs. She was even prevailed upon (by her promiſes to ſit by her ſide and watch) to throw herſelf on the bed, and ſuffer a few minutes ſleep — for ſleep to her was ſuffering; her fears giving birth to dreams terrifying as her waking thoughts.

More wearied than refreſhed with her ſleep, ſhe roſe at break of day, and refuſing to admit of an article in the change of dreſs, ſhe perſiſted to ſit in the torn diſordered habit in which ſhe had been dragged away;

away; nor would ſhe taſte a morſel of all the delicacies that were prepared for her.

Her attendant for ſome time obſerved the moſt ſubmiſſive and reverential awe; but finding this had not the effect of gaining compliance to her advice, ſhe varied her manners, and began by leſs ſervile means to attempt an influence. She ſaid her orders were to be obedient, while ſhe herſelf was obeyed—at leaſt in circumſtances ſo material as the lady's health, of which ſhe had the charge as a phyſician, and expected equal compliance from her patient—food and freſh apparel ſhe preſcribed as the only means to prevent death; and even threatened her invalid with ſomething worſe, a viſit from Lord Mar rave, if ſhe continued obſtinate.

Now loathing her for the deception ſhe had practiſed, more, than had ſhe received her thus at firſt, Matilda hid her eyes from the ſight of her; and when ſhe was obliged look, ſhe ſhuddered.

This female at length thought it her duty to wait upon her worthy employer, and inform him the young lady in her truſt would certainly die, unleſs there were means employed to oblige her to take ſome nouriſhment.

Lord Margrave, glad of an opportunity that might apologize for his intruſion upon Lady Matilda, went with eagerneſs to her apartment, and throwing himſelf at her feet, conjured her if ſhe would ſave his life, as well as her own, to ſubmit to be conſoled.

The extreme diſguſt and horror his preſence inſpired, cauſed Matilda for a moment to forget all her weakneſs, her want of health, her want of power; and riſing from the place where ſhe ſat, ſhe cried, and with her voice elevated,

"Leave me, my Lord, or I'll die in ſpite of all your care; I'll inſtantly expire with grief, if you do not leave me."

Accuſtomed

Accuſtomed to the tears and reproaches of the ſex, though not of any like her, his Lordſhip treated with contempt thoſe menaces of anger, and ſeizing her hand, carried it to his lips.

Enraged, and overwhelmed with ſorrow at the affront, ſhe cried, (forgetting every other friend ſhe had,) "Oh! my dear Miſs Woodley, why are you not here to take my part?"

"Nay," returned his Lordſhip, ſtifling a fit of laughter, "I ſhould think the old prieſt, would be as good a champion as the lady."

The memory of Sandford with all his kindneſs, now ruſhed ſo forcibly on Matilda's mind, ſhe ſhed a ſhower of tears, thinking how much he felt, and would continue to feel, for her ſituation. Once ſhe thought on Ruſhbrook too, and thought even *he* would be vext for her. Of her father ſhe did not think, ſhe durſt not, one

ſingle time the thought intruded, but ſhe hurried it away, it was too bitter.

It was now quite night again; and near to that hour ſhe came firſt to the houſe.—Lord Margrave, though at ſome diſtance from her, remained ſtill in her apartment; while her female companion had ſtolen away. His inſenſibility to her lamentations, the agitated looks he ſometimes caſt upon her, her weakly and defenceleſs ſtate, all conſpired to fill her mind with horror.

He ſaw her apprehenſions pictured in her diſtracted face, diſheveled hair, and the whole of her forlorn appearance,—yet, notwithſtanding his former reſolves, he could not reſiſt the deſire of fulfilling all her dreadful expectations.

He once again approached her, and was going again to take her hand; when the report of a piſtol on the ſtaircaſe, and a confuſion of perſons aſſembling towards the apartment deterred him.

He

He ſtarted — but looked more ſurpriſed than alarmed; while her alarm augmented; for ſhe ſuppoſed this tumult was ſome experiment to intimidate her into ſubmiſſion. She therefore wrung her hands, and lifted up her eyes to heaven in the laſt agony of deſpair, when one of Lord Margrave's ſervants entered and haſtily cried,

"Lord Elmwood, Sir."

That moment her father entered — and with the unreſtrained fondneſs of a parent, folded her in his arms.

Her extreme, her exceſs of joy on ſuch a meeting; and from ſuch anguiſh reſcued, was ſtill, in part, repreſſed by his awful preſence. The apprehenſions to which ſhe had been accuſtomed, kept her timid and doubtful — ſhe feared to ſpeak, or claſp him in return for his embrace, but falling on her knees clung round his legs, and bathed his feet with her tears.—— Theſe were the happieſt moments ſhe had ever known—perhaps the happieſt *he* had ever known.

Lord Margrave, on whom Lord Elmwood had not even caſt a look, now left the room; but as he quitted it, called out,

"My Lord Elmwood, if you have any demands on me"——

His Lordſhip interrupted him,—— "Would you make me an executioner? The law ſhall be your only antagoniſt."

Matilda, quite exhauſted, yet upheld by the ſudden tranſport ſhe had felt, walked, as her father led her, out of this wretched dwelling—more deſpicable than the cottage built with clay.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXV.

OVERCOME with the want of two nights reſt from her cruel fears, and all thoſe fears now huſhed; Matilda ſoon after ſhe was placed in the carriage with Lord Elmwood, dropped faſt aſleep; and thus inſenſibly ſurpriſed, leaned her head againſt her father in the ſweeteſt ſlumber imagination can conceive.

When ſhe awoke, inſtead of the uſual melancholy proſpect before her view, ſhe heard the voice of the late dreaded Lord Elmwood, tenderly ſaying,

"We will go no farther to-night, the fatigue is too much for her;—order beds here directly, and ſome proper perſons to ſit up and attend her."

She could only turn to him with a look of love and duty; her tongue could not utter a ſentence.

In

In the morning ſhe found her father by the ſide of her bed.—He inquired "If ſhe was in health ſufficient to purſue her journey, or if ſhe would remain where ſhe was?"

"I am able to go with you," ſhe anſwered inſtantly.

"Nay," replied he, "perhaps you ought to ſtay here till you are better?"

"I *am* better," ſaid ſhe, "and ready to go with you."——Half afraid he meant to ſend her from him.

He perceived her fears, and replied, "Nay if you ſtay, ſo ſhall I—and when I go, I ſhall take you along with me to my houſe."

"To Elmwood Houſe?" ſhe aſked eagerly.

"No, to my houſe in town, where I intend to be all the winter, and where we ſhall live together."

She turned her face on the pillow to conceal her tears of joy, but her ſobs revealed them.

"Come

"Come," ſaid he, "this kiſs is a token you have nothing to fear."—And he kiſſed her affectionately.—"I ſhall ſend too for Miſs Woodley immediately," continued he.

"Oh! I ſhall be overjoyed to ſee her, my Lord—and to ſee Mr. Sandford—and even Mr. Ruſhbrook."

"Do you know him?" ſaid Lord Elmwood.

"Yes," ſhe replied "I have ſeen him twice."

His Lordſhip hoping the air might be a means of re-eſtabliſhing her ſtrength and ſpirits, now left the room and ordered his carriage; while ſhe aroſe, attended by one of his female ſervants, for whom he had ſent to town, to bring ſuch changes of apparel as was requiſite.

When Matilda was ready to join her father in the next room, ſhe felt a tremor ſeize her, that made it almoſt impoſſible to appear before him.—No other circumſtance

ſtance now depending to agitate her heart, ſhe felt more forcibly its embarraſſment at meeting on terms of eaſy intercourſe, him, whom ſhe had been uſed to think of, but with that diſtant reverence and fear, which his ſeverity had excited; and ſhe knew not how to dare to ſpeak, or look on him with that freedom her affection warranted.

After ſeveral efforts to conquer theſe nice and refined ſenſations, but to no purpoſe, ſhe went at laſt to his apartment.—He was reading; but as ſhe entered, put out his hand and drew her to him.—Her tears wholly overcame her.—He could have intermingled his—but aſſuming a grave countenance, he commanded her to deſiſt from exhauſting her ſpirits; and, after a few powerful ſtruggles, ſhe obeyed.

Before the morning was over ſhe experienced the extreme joy of ſitting by her father's ſide as they drove to town, and receiving during his converſation, a thouſand proofs of his love, and tokens of her laſting happineſs.

It was now the middle of November, and yet as Matilda paſſed along, the fields to her delighted eye appeared green; the trees in their bloom; and every bird ſeemed to ſing the ſweeteſt muſic—Never to her, did the ſun riſe upon a morning ſuch as this—never did her imagination comprehend the human heart could feel happineſs ſo true as her's.

On arriving at the houſe, there was no abatement of her felicity—all was reſpect and duty on the part of the domeſtics—all paternal care on the part of Lord Elmwood; —and ſhe ſeemed to be at that ſummit of her wiſhes which annihilates hope, but that the proſpect of ſeeing Miſs Woodley and Mr. Sandford, ſtill kept this pleaſing paſſion in exiſtence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

RUSHBROOK was detained at Elmwood Houſe during all this time, more from the friendly perſuaſions, nay even prayers, of Sandford, than by the commands of Lord Elmwood. He had, but for Sandford, followed his uncle and expoſed himſelf to his ſevereſt anger, rather than have endured a ſtate of the moſt piercing inquietude, ſuch as he ſuffered till the news arrived of Lady Matilda's ſafety. —He indeed had little elſe to fear from the known, firm, and courageous character of her father, and the expedition with which he undertook his journey; but lover's fears are like thoſe of women, and no argument could perſuade either him or Miſs Woodley

Woodley (who had now ventured to come to Elmwood Houſe) but that Matilda's peace of mind might be for ever deſtroyed before ſhe was ſet at liberty.

The ſummons from Lord Elmwood for their coming to town, was received by each of this party with delight; but the impatience to obey it was in Ruſhbrook ſo violent, it was painful to himſelf, and extremely troubleſome to Sandford; who wiſhed, from his regard to Lady Matilda rather to delay, than hurry their journey.

"You are to blame," ſaid he to him and to Miſs Woodley, "to wiſh by your arrival, to divide with Lord Elmwood that tender tie, with which obligations conferred ever binds the donor.—At preſent there is no one with him to ſhare in the care and protection of his daughter, and he is under the neceſſity of diſcharging the duty himſelf; accuſtomed to this, it may become ſo powerful he cannot throw it off, even if his former reſolutions ſhould urge him to it.—While we remain here, therefore,

fore, Lady Matilda is ſafe with her father; but it would not ſurpriſe me, if on our arrival (eſpecially if we are precipitate) he ſhould place her again with Miſs Woodley at a diſtance."

To this forcible conjecture, they ſubmitted for a few days, and then moſt gladly ſet out for town.

On their arrival, they were met, even at the door of the ſtreet, by Lady Matilda; and with an expreſſion of joy, they did not ſuppoſe her features could have worn.—She embraced Miſs Woodley! hung upon Sandford!—and to Mr. Ruſhbrook, who from his conſcious love only bowed at an humble diſtance, ſhe held out her hand with every look and geſture of the tendereſt eſteem.

When Lord Elmwood joined them, he welcomed them all moſt ſincerely; eſpecially Sandford; with whom he had not ſpoken for many days before he left the country, merely for his alluding to the wretched

wretched ſituation of his daughter.—And Sandford (with his fellow travellers) now ſaw his Lordſhip treat that daughter with all the eaſy, natural fondneſs, as if ſhe had lived with him from her infancy. He appeared, however, at times, under the apprehenſion, that the propenſity of man to jealouſy, might give Ruſhbrook a pang at this dangerous rival in his love and fortune—for though his Lordſhip remembered well the hazard he had once ventured to befriend Matilda, yet the preſent unlimited reconciliation was ſomething ſo unlooked for, it might be a trial too much for his generoſity, to remain wholly diſintereſted on the event. Slight as was this ſuſpicion, it did Ruſhbrook injuſtice.——He loved Lady Matilda too ſincerely; he loved her father's happineſs, and her mother's memory too faithfully, not to be rejoiced at all he was witneſs of; nor did the ſecret hope that whiſpered to him "There every bleſſing might one day be mutual," increaſe the pleaſure he found, in beholding Matilda happy.

Unexpected

Unexpected affairs in which Lord Elmwood had been for ſome time engaged, diverted his attention for a while from the marriage of his nephew; nor did he at this time find his diſpoſition ſufficiently ſevere to exact from the young man a compliance with his wiſhes, at the cruel alternative of being for ever diſcarded.—He felt his mind, by the late incident, too much ſoftened for ſuch harſhneſs; he yet wiſhed for the alliance he had propoſed; for he was more conſiſtent in his character than to ſuffer the ſudden tenderneſs his daughter's danger had awakened, to derange thoſe plans ſo long projected; and never for a moment did he indulge—for perhaps it had been an indulgence—the idea of replacing her exactly in that ſituation to which ſhe was born, to the diſappointment of all his nephew's expectations.

Milder now in his temper than he had been for years before, and knowing he could be no longer irritated upon the ſubject

ject of his daughter, his Lordſhip once more reſolved to truſt himſelf in a conference with Ruſhbrook on the ſubject of marriage, meaning at the ſame time to mention Matilda as an opponent from whom he had nothing to fear. But for ſome time before Ruſhbrook was called to his private audience, he had by his unwearied attention, endeavoured to impreſs upon Matilda's mind, the ſofteſt ſentiments in his favour.—He ſucceeded—but not as he wiſhed.—She loved him as her friend, her couſin, her foſter-brother, but not as a lover.—The idea of love never once came to her thoughts; and ſhe would ſport with Ruſhbrook like the moſt harmleſs child, while he, all impaſſioned, could with difficulty reſiſt telling her, what ſhe made him ſuffer.

At the meeting between him and Lord Elmwood, to which he was ſent for to give his final anſwer on that ſubject which had once nearly proved ſo fatal to him; after

after a thouſand fears, much confuſion and embarraſſment, he at length frankly confeſſed his "Heart was engaged, and had been ſo, long before his Lordſhip offered to direct his choice."

Lord Elmwood deſired to know "on whom he had placed his affections."

"I dare not tell you, my Lord," — returned he, infinitely confuſed; but Mr. Sandford can witneſs their ſincerity, and how long they have been fixed."

"Fixed!" cried his Lordſhip.

"Immoveably fixed, my Lord; and yet the object is as unknowing of it to this moment, as you yourſelf have been; and I ſwear ever ſhall be ſo, without your permiſſion."

"Name the object," ſaid Lord Elmwood, anxiouſly.

"My

"My Lord, I dare not — the laſt time I named her to you, you threatened to abandon me for my arrogance."

Lord Elmwood ſtarted. — "My daughter! — Would you marry her?"

"But with your approbation, my Lord; and that" ———

Before he could proceed a word farther, his Lordſhip left the room haſtily — and left Ruſhbrook all terror for his approaching fate.

Lord Elmwood went immediately into the apartment where Sandford, Miſs Woodley, and Matilda, were ſitting, and cried with an angry voice and with his countenance diſordered,

"Ruſhbrook has offended me beyond forgiveneſs. Go, Sandford, to the library, where he is, and tell him this inſtant to quit my houſe, and never dare to return."

Miſs

Miſs Woodley lifted up her hands and ſighed.

Sandford roſe ſlowly from his ſeat to execute his office.

While Lady Matilda, who was arranging her muſic-books upon the inſtrument, ſtopped from her employment ſuddenly, with her face bathed in tears.

A general ſilence enſued, till Lord Elmwood, reſuming his angry tone, cried, "Did you hear me, Mr. Sandford?"

Sandford now, without a word in reply, made for the door — but there Matilda impeded him, and throwing her arms about his neck, cried,

"Dear Mr. Sandford, do not."

"How!" exclaimed her father.

She ſaw the frown that was impending, and ruſhing towards him, took his hand fearfully

fearfully and knelt at his feet. — "Mr. Ruſhbrook is my relation," ſhe cried in a pathetic voice, "my companion, my friend — before you loved me he was anxious for my happineſs, and often viſited me to propoſe ſome kindneſs. I cannot ſee him turned out of your houſe without feeling for him, what he once felt for me."

Lord Elmwood turned aſide to conceal his ſenſations---then raiſing her from the floor, he ſaid, "Do you know what he aſked of me?"

"No,"---anſwered ſhe in the utmoſt ignorance, and with the utmoſt innocence painted on her face. "But whatever it is, my Lord, though you do not grant it, yet pardon him for aſking."

"Perhaps *you* would grant him what he has requeſted?" ſaid his Lordſhip.

"Moſt willingly---was it in my gift."

"It is," replied he, "And go to him in the library, and hear what he has to ſay;—for on your will his fate ſhall depend."

Like lightning ſhe flew out of the room; while even the grave Sandford ſmiled at the idea of their meeting.

Ruſhbrook, with his fears all verified by the manner in which his uncle had left him, ſat with his head reclined againſt a book-caſe, and every limb extended with the deſpair that had ſeized him.

Matilda nimbly opened the door and cried, "Mr. Ruſhbrook, I am come to comfort you."

"That you have always done," ſaid he, riſing in rapture to receive her, even in the midſt of all his ſadneſs.

"What is it you want?" ſaid ſhe, "What have you aſked of my father that he has denied you?"

"I have

"I have aſked for that," replied he, "which is dearer to me than my life."

"Be ſatisfied then," returned ſhe, "for you ſhall have it."

"Dear Matilda! it is not in your power to beſtow."

"But his Lordſhip has told me it *ſhall* be in my power; and has deſired me to give, or to refuſe it you, at my own pleaſure."

"O Heavens?" cried Ruſhbrook in tranſport, "Has he?"

"He has indeed — before Mr. Sandford and Miſs Woodley.——Now tell me what your petition is?"

"I aſked him," cried Ruſhbrook, trembling, "for a wife."

Her hand that had juſt then taken hold of his, in the warmth of her wiſh to ſerve him, now dropped down as with the ſtroke of death, her face loſt its colour, and ſhe leaned againſt the deſk by which they were ſtanding, without uttering a word.

"What means this change," ſaid he; "Do you not wiſh me happy?"

"Yes," ſhe exclaimed: "Heaven is my witneſs. But it gives me concern to think we muſt part."

"Then let us be joined," cried he, falling at her feet, till death alone can part us."

All the ſenſibility, the reſerve, the pride, with which ſhe was ſo amply poſſeſſed, returned to her that moment. She ſtarted, and cried, "Could Lord Elmwood know for what he ſent me?"

"He

"He did," replied Ruſhbrook—"I boldly told him of my preſumptuous love, and he has yielded to you alone, the power over my happineſs or miſery.—Oh! do not doom me to the latter."

Whether the heart of Matilda, ſuch as it has been deſcribed, *could* ſentence him to miſery, the reader is left to ſurmiſe—and if he ſuppoſes that it did not, he has every reaſon to ſuppoſe their wedded life was a life of happineſs.

He has beheld the pernicious effects of an improper education in the deſtiny which attended the unthinking Miſs Milner—On the oppoſite ſide, then, what may not be hoped from that ſchool of prudence, though of adverſity, in which Matilda was bred?

And Mr. Milner, Matilda's grandfather, had better have given his fortune to a diſ-

tant branch of his family — as Matilda's father once meant to do — so he had bestowed upon his daughter

A PROPER EDUCATION.

FINIS.